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Friday, 20 June 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Khalilzad	(United States of America)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Grauls
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. La Yifan
	Costa Rica	Mr. Weisleder
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2008/354)

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08-39202 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2008/354)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Serbia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

The President: On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Sejdiu to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in response to a letter dated 17 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Serbia addressed to the President of the Security Council and contained in document S/2008/401.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/354, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

I welcome the participation of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, at this meeting and invite him to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: Let me start by thanking the Security Council for this opportunity to present the Council with my assessment of the situation in Kosovo and my idea for the way forward for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) as the international civil presence in Kosovo.

Before doing so, I would like to welcome the presence here today of His Excellency Mr. Boris Tadić of Serbia and of His Excellency Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu of Kosovo.

The challenge facing us is an enormous one. In almost 40 years of my diplomatic life, I have never encountered an issue as divisive, as delicate and as intractable as the Kosovo issue. Legally, politically and morally, it is a landscape of enormous complexity and sensitivity that requires the exercise of extraordinary objectivity and balance. The declaration of independence in February, the violence at the customs posts and in Mitrovica, the elections organized by the Serbs, the promulgation in Pristina of a new constitution — all of those recent developments, and many before them, have been fiercely contested by the communities and by their supporters abroad, and have profoundly changed the environment in which we are operating.

In coming before the Council today to listen and to seek its guidance, I am very aware that the package I have developed is a humble effort in the light of those new developments to try to find an operational modus vivendi to help move Kosovo a few steps back from the brink of further conflict. To many, it may not be fully satisfying, because it does not completely meet the aspirations of any of the key stakeholders. Indeed, it is not a winner-take-all solution. Nevertheless, personally, after open and transparent consultations with all concerned over the past months, I have come to the view that the package represents the least objectionable way forward. I have presented it to the Council mindful of the need to preserve and safeguard the credibility and effectiveness of the United Nations, in the interest of all of its Members.

If there is any wisdom in this package, I should also thank Council members: I have greatly benefited from my wide-ranging consultations with you and with your ministers in the development of the package. Indeed, I held consultations with every member of the Council, as well as with the parties and other stakeholders, including the leaders present here today. I appreciated their flexibility and admired their leadership. I have drawn richly on their ideas. My Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations has also benefited from consultations in both Pristina and Belgrade. This has been further enriched by the daily contacts of my representatives on the ground and by the work of the men and women of UNMIK.

The report (S/2008/354) before the Council sets out the key recent developments in relation to Kosovo. As the Council is aware, following the declaration of independence by Kosovo's representatives, on 17 February of this year, some Member States have recognized Kosovo as a sovereign and independent State, while others have not. The differences within the international community have added to the complexity of this issue. I have taken note of the position of the Republic of Serbia as conveyed to me by President Tadić.

Mindful of the divisions in the international community, the United Nations has taken a position of strict neutrality on the question of Kosovo's status. UNMIK operates within the framework of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), which is the legal framework for its mandate and which remains in force until the Security Council decides otherwise. As I have indicated to the Council on prior occasions, UNMIK has continued to operate and to implement its mandate in the light of the evolving circumstances, however difficult that might be. That is the foundation of my package.

Following the declaration of independence by Kosovo, UNMIK's ability to operate as before has come into serious question. The constitution promulgated by the Kosovo authorities came into effect on 15 June. That constitution envisages no real role for UNMIK. The powers residing with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General are sought to be assumed by the new authorities. On the other side of the ledger, the Kosovo Serb community has overwhelmingly rejected the new constitution and the new laws that are emerging from Pristina. They have expanded their boycott of Pristina institutions and, while they have agreed to continue to apply UNMIK laws, they have opposed —sometimes violently — any effort to bring them under the aegis of the new arrangements in Pristina.

All of that is contributing to a substantially changed situation in Kosovo. It is my assessment that, taken together, these developments have created a profoundly new reality in which UNMIK is no longer able to perform as effectively as in the past the vast majority of its tasks as an interim administration. That needs to be acknowledged as a fact of life.

In the light of recent developments, the report notes that I intend to adjust operational aspects of the international civil presence in Kosovo and to reconfigure the profile and structure of UNMIK. I will not repeat the details of the package here; it is more important for me to hear the reactions of participants. I will just note that a reconfigured and restructured UNMIK will continue to carry out a number of functions. These will include, significantly, functions related to the dialogue on the implementation of provisions in six areas contained in my letter to President Tadić: police, courts, customs, transport and infrastructure, boundaries and Serbian patrimony.

I consider that this dialogue, which was initiated by my Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and which will be carried forward by my Special Representative in close consultation with the authorities in Kosovo and with relevant stakeholders, is of crucial importance for all of Kosovo's communities. I look to the Security Council and to the broader international community to support my Special Representative's efforts in bringing forward that dialogue.

As the Security Council is aware, the European Union has expressed its readiness to perform an enhanced operational role in Kosovo in the area of the rule of law, and has put in place measures to do so. I believe that that enhanced role would be in the interests of the United Nations and of the international community as a whole.

I also note the aspiration of people of all communities in the region to live in closer association with the European family of nations. As I set out in my report, the European Union will therefore take on some increasing operational responsibilities in the areas of international policing, justice and customs in Kosovo, within a reconfigured UNMIK, within the mandate established by resolution 1244 (1999), and under an umbrella headed by my Special Representative.

Nine years since the inception of UNMIK, the situation in Kosovo has evolved profoundly. Under the United Nations interim administration, Kosovo has made significant strides in moving beyond conflict towards peace, in creating and consolidating democratic governance institutions and in creating the foundations for a viable economy. Not everything has been achieved, but we have come a long way, and we must be sure that, with these most recent changes in the situation, we do not lose what has been gained with so much effort. We must evolve our presence to ensure that earlier achievements are safeguarded and built upon.

The task will be a difficult one. To lead this new phase of the mission, I intend to appoint Mr. Lamberto Zannier of Italy to be my Special Representative. He will help to carry forward the vision I have presented in my report and to lead a new phase of dialogue, and he will be scrupulously balanced in his approach.

The reconfiguration of UNMIK that I have presented to the Security Council aims at preserving and consolidating the achievements reached during a tumultuous period and at creating the foundations for Kosovo's further progress within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999). In doing so, my overriding objectives are to ensure Kosovo's overall stability, to protect and promote the interests of all of its communities and to maintain international peace and security in Kosovo and the broader region.

I take this opportunity to once again express my profound appreciation to the members of the Council and the leaders of the concerned parties for their valuable support and understanding in the broader interest of peace and security in the region.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia.

President Tadić (*spoke in Serbian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting of the Security Council. Once again, we are gathered to discuss troubling developments in Serbia's southern province of Kosovo and Metohija, which have been caused by the unilateral declaration of independence by its Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, which took place on 17 February of this year.

It is the position of the Republic of Serbia that the unilateral declaration of independence directly contravenes the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and other cornerstone documents upon which the international system has been built. Equally important is the fact that resolution 1244 (1999) clearly places a binding Chapter VII obligation on all Member States to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country.

A great majority of this Organization's 192 Member States have continued to abide by those principles and obligations. On behalf of the Republic of Serbia, allow me to express my profound appreciation to them for their commitment to the rule of international law and to state clearly my country's continued dedication to those same principles.

There is a minority that has, unfortunately, chosen to support the attempt at secession by the Kosovo Albanians. That has put at risk the consolidation of peace and stability in the Western Balkans has and set back more than a decade of hard work by this Council. It has also created an environment in which the international system as a whole is becoming more unstable, more insecure and more unpredictable. The potential damage to the founding principles of this Organization is becoming more apparent, as is the awareness that the legacy that the United Nations will pass on to the future generations will be tarnished.

The Republic of Serbia, for its part, has taken a position entirely consistent with the fact that we were a co-founder of this Organization in 1945 — one that takes seriously international law and its aim of promoting peaceful, just and consensual resolutions of disputes. That is why our National Assembly has declared the unilateral declaration of independence and all subsequent decisions stemming from it to be null and void, and that is why we have ruled out the use of force, while affirming our right to employ all diplomatic and political means to ensure that a so-called independent Kosovo does not join the world community of sovereign States.

I want to be very clear. Serbia will never recognize the independence of Kosovo. We will continue to work towards finding a legal way forward that seeks to bridge differences and to find a compromise solution to the long-standing conflict between Serbs and Albanians.

It is in that context that I turn to a consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (S/2008/354) submitted to this Council and to the letter that I received from him dated 12 June 2008. The report refers to the emergence of a "new reality" (*paras. 7 and 10*) in Kosovo as a result of the unilateral declaration of independence. It also refers to the recent passage, by the provisional Assembly of our province of Kosovo, of a so-called constitution intended to implement the Ahtisaari proposal, which has not received the endorsement of this Council and therefore carries no legal weight whatsoever.

The report states that "the constitution is designed in such a way that it would effectively remove from UNMIK its current powers as an interim civil administration" (*para. 7*). That usurpation by the authorities in Pristina of the mandate this Council gave to UNMIK is deeply troubling. Equally worrisome is the fact that the report gives an impression of acquiescing to an unjustifiable violation of resolution 1244 (1999).

I am led to conclude that the report is an acknowledgment that an influential and determined minority can set aside considerations of international law in the name of appeasing an ethnic group that has been threatening violence if its demands are not met. That must not be the way forward. International peace and security can only be consolidated through dialogue, not imposition; through agreement, not compulsion; and through law, not threats.

Since the unilateral declaration of independence, the human rights record in our southern province has not improved. Internally displaced persons have not returned. Jobs have not been created. Destroyed homes belonging to Serbs have not been rebuilt. Serbian private property has not been returned. Organized crime has not been reduced. Our cultural heritage has not become more secure. In fact, since the unilateral declaration of independence, things have gotten worse. The uncomfortable yet incontrovertible truth is that the "new reality" to which the report refers has caused a further deterioration in the already unstable situation on the ground.

I will provide an example. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Joachim Rücker, finally agreed a few weeks ago to issue an executive decision restoring illegally seized land to its rightful owners: the thirteenth century Serbian Orthodox Decani monastery — a UNESCO World Heritage site. The unfortunate result has been the refusal of the municipal authorities of the town of Decani to restore the cadastral record as required by the executive order, which was issued under the authority of resolution 1244 (1999). United Nations officials in Decani have been assaulted after having been declared to be personae non gratae.

This illustration of the callous disregard for the rule of law and the United Nations standards that we face throughout the province is implicitly taken up in the report through its assessment that "UNMIK will no longer be able to perform effectively the vast majority of its tasks as an interim administration" (*S/2008/354, para. 17*). This can only lead us to the conclusion that the United Nations mission has not been accomplished. In other words, its mandate has not been fulfilled and its task has not been completed. Under those circumstances, the United Nations cannot, and must not, walk away.

It is therefore the position of the Republic of Serbia that the course of action proposed in the report cannot give rise to a process that leads to a compromise solution on the future status of our southern province. That is why the Republic of Serbia cannot endorse the Secretary-General's report. Until the process envisaged in resolution 1244 (1999) to determine Kosovo's future status is complete, the international community, led by the United Nations, has to retain its central role in the maintenance of peace and stability in Kosovo.

"Reconfiguration", to which both the report and the Secretary-General's letter to me refer, must be decided by the Security Council, which is the only institution endowed with the power to legitimate changes in the composition of the international presence in Kosovo, as paragraphs 5 and 19 of resolution 1244 (1999) make abundantly clear.

In addition, we agree that the six topics mentioned in both documents — police, judiciary, customs, transportation and infrastructure, boundaries, and patrimony — require pressing attention. Every day that goes by without working towards some sort of agreement on these and other issues raises the likelihood of the creation of unsustainable hopes and dangerous, uncoordinated outcomes on the ground. My country is therefore prepared to continue engaging in dialogue with the United Nations in order to arrive at a satisfactory agreement.

Finally, I am concerned that an implicit shift in position by NATO took place in Brussels a few days ago during NATO's most recent ministerial meeting. While reaffirming its status neutrality and adherence to resolution 1244 (1999), it also announced that KFOR would undertake what it called "new tasks". I refer more specifically to NATO's intent to supervise the standing down of the Kosovo Protection Corps and to supervise and support the establishment and training of the so-called Kosovo Security Force, a new institution whose establishment has not been approved by the Security Council. This places it clearly beyond the scope of resolution 1244 (1999).

Accordingly, I must express my country's apprehension at the possibility that parts of the international community presence in Kosovo have chosen to participate in the formation and training of a quasi-military force. Such a wrong step would call into question the trust that KFOR has worked hard to attain among all the communities of our southern province, especially the Kosovo Serbs.

I would like to raise another issue with this Council. This concerns what was perhaps the final negligent act by the outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Joachim Rücker. Just a few days ago, he issued an executive decision that initiated a process by which funds totalling more than €426 million could be illegitimately transferred to the authorities in Pristina.

I want to make it abundantly clear that these funds, held in escrow by the United Nations to offset future claims by workers, mostly Kosovo Serbs, who have been laid off and Serbian companies as a result of the questionable privatization process undertaken by the Kosovo Trust Agency, are not the property of the authorities in Pristina. The United Nations must immediately take all appropriate measures to ensure that these funds remain in its possession and guarantee they continue to be available for their intended purpose. We must work together to produce a solution to this serious issue in the very near future.

I now draw attention to the fact that the Republic of Serbia held parliamentary elections on 11 May. I have a constitutional duty to guide the process of the formation of the Government, which will be united in pursuing the policy of defending the integrity of our country and will implement the clear commitment of the citizens of Serbia to move decisively forward to full membership in the European Union. It will also have the duty to complete the process of full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia at The Hague in the conviction that a stable and secure future for the entire Western Balkans lies in the European Union. The time has passed for us to be part of the problem of the Balkans: we want to be part of the solution.

I would like to stress the importance of finding a legal way forward on Kosovo, acceptable to all stakeholders and approved by the Security Council. Only such an approach can produce a sustainable outcome that will enable us fully to construct and integrate, and so to grasp the infinite opportunities that the Europe of the twenty-first century offers to all visionary crafters of a more prosperous tomorrow.

That is why I see Europe as the key to Serbia's future success. I draw strength for this fundamental conviction from the solemn words of the preamble of the Treaty of Rome: "pooling their resources to preserve and strengthen peace and liberty". That is the kind of Europe to which we are committed, and to which we — and the entire Western Balkans — will belong very soon.

Let there be no more divisions, no more discord and no more conflict. The time to strengthen peace and economic development is now.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Serbia for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu.

Mr. Sejdiu (*spoke in Albanian; English interpretation provided by the speaker*): It is my pleasure to appear before the Security Council to speak of the situation in my country, the Republic of Kosovo. Over the past four months the Security Council has held regular and frequent meetings to discuss Kosovo even as other regions demand the attention of the international community. I recognize that this programme reflects the great importance that the Security Council attaches to peace and stability in South-East Europe.

As members know, a great deal has happened in my country since the beginning of this year. Kosovo's independence, declared in conformity with the recommendations of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, has been recognized by 43 Members of the United Nations, and more countries are recognizing it every month. As a State desiring full integration into the Euro-Atlantic community, Kosovo has been particularly grateful that more than two thirds of the members of the European Union and NATO promptly recognized our new status.

Kosovo has also achieved tangible progress on the ground. As stated in our declaration of independence, the Ahtisaari plan is the guiding framework for our efforts. That document, overwhelmingly endorsed by the Assembly of Kosovo, continues to enjoy the broad support of our people. In accordance with the obligations that Kosovo assumed under the plan, the Assembly has adopted more than 40 pieces of legislation in crucial areas such as the decentralization of local government, the protection of ethnic minorities and the safeguarding of Kosovo's rich cultural heritage. A new constitution came into force in Kosovo on 15 June. It enshrines many of the provisions of the Ahtisaari plan and reflects the highest standards of human rights.

Although there have been violent challenges in Kosovo, including attacks resulting in the tragic death of a United Nations police officer, most of Kosovo has remained calm and orderly.

In short, the transition to our new status has gone well.

Today, however, the Council is meeting to discuss the future of the United Nations presence in Kosovo. As we recall, nine years ago this month, the Security Council took the extraordinary step of severing Belgrade's governance over Kosovo and placing Kosovo under a transitional United Nations administration. At that time, in that desperate year of 1999, hundreds of thousands of my fellow citizens were displaced as a result of Belgrade's ethnic cleansing. Milosevic's repression had left us without any functioning institutions.

We were therefore grateful when the United Nations came to Kosovo to help us rebuild our shattered society. With United Nations support, we developed our own democratic institutions of self-government and selected leaders through multiple rounds of free and fair elections. The United Nations oversaw the establishment of an entire system of governance: our municipalities, our ministries, our Assembly, our judiciary and our police.

In recent years, the United Nations has progressively handed governing responsibilities over to Kosovo's new institutions. Since 1999, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has scaled down its physical presence and personnel as the situation has improved in Kosovo. Throughout this process, the United Nations has continually taken account of circumstances in Kosovo and has adapted its presence as Kosovo's capacity to govern itself has developed.

As the Secretary-General noted in his recent report (S/2008/354), Kosovo's independence and the entry into force of our constitution have obviously created a dramatically new situation to which the United Nations must adapt once more. The people of Kosovo, therefore, appreciate the Secretary-General's initiative to reconfigure the United Nations presence in our country. We note that the Secretary-General has proposed a number of residual tasks for the United Nations presence in Kosovo, and we further understand that the United Nations will continue to perform rule of law functions for a limited duration in accordance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) as until such time that the European Union is able to fully perform its operational role.

I assure the Secretary-General that he will have the ongoing support and cooperation of Kosovo as he moves forward with this initiative. I have indicated this support in a letter I sent to the Secretary-General earlier this week.

The Secretary-General has also proposed dialogue to discuss possible practical arrangements to address threats to stability. We are open to this proposal and take seriously the Secretary-General's commitment to consult closely with us, as no arrangements can be valid without the participation and approval of the Government of Kosovo.

With respect to the threats to stability, we recognize that addressing the situation of our minority communities is the most essential element in preserving peace. As President, I have continually reached out to ethnic minorities, especially Kosovo Serbs, to reassure them that they have a home in Kosovo. Kosovo's current Government, which includes representatives from minority ethnic groups is constantly seeking new ways to build a more inclusive and just State.

I am particularly concerned, however, that our neighbour, Serbia, has promoted a policy that its leaders call "functional separation of ethnic Serbs from ethnic Albanians in Kosovo". As the Secretary-General noted in his report, Serbia organized elections this spring for illegal parallel municipal governments on our territory. Serbia has also discouraged ethnic Serbs from participating in Kosovo's Government or reporting through our multi-ethnic police chain of command.

The people of Kosovo are understandably concerned about the threat to our sovereignty. We are equally concerned, however, about the message that such policies send to Serbs in Kosovo. Policies of division undermine the multi-ethnic governance that the United Nations has promoted in Kosovo since 1999. These policies do not bring lasting peace or stability, only resentment and misunderstanding. With great sadness, I recall how such policies brought trouble and tragedy to my region in the 1990s.

The Republic of Kosovo is the seventh independent State to emerge out of the non-consensual collapse of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. Most of these countries gained their statehood under circumstances that were contentious, controversial and challenged. Although this history is a dark one, I believe that all seven States of the former Yugoslavia, including Serbia, have a bright and prosperous future. The United Nations role in bringing about such a future has been essential.

As the period of United Nations administration in Kosovo comes now to a close, I wish to reiterate my gratitude to the women and men of the United Nations for their work helping my country recover from war.

The people of Kosovo believe that the best way to honour this legacy is to build a peace-loving State that aspires to the highest purposes and principles of the United Nations.

The President: I thank His Excellency Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu for his statement. I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make comments or ask questions in connection with the statements we have just heard.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): Let me first express our warmest welcome to President Tadić and President Sejdiu and thank them for their statements.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, to whom goes our deepest and most sincere appreciation for his efforts and good offices with the parties and the key stakeholders at a politically very delicate juncture. Italy fully supports the realistic, wise, balanced and forward-looking way forward that the Secretary-General has outlined in his so important and meaningful report (S/2008/354).

The uncertainty of recent months is to no one's benefit, least of all that of the ethnic minorities we are trying to protect, who need, more than ever, a stable environment.

Kosovo has considerably advanced on the path of stabilization and in building up its democratic institutions. Nevertheless, shortcomings still exist, and the objective of harmonious multi-ethnic coexistence has not yet been reached. An extra effort — an extra mile — to reach this goal must be made.

As the Secretary-General rightly stated in his report, "the process of full reconciliation and integration of Kosovo communities will be a long-term one" (*S/2008/354, para. 2*). The international community must remain engaged in Kosovo as long as necessary and must provide strong support in that regard.

It is encouraging to read in the report of the Secretary-General that both Pristina and Belgrade recognize the need to find a solution to continue the international civil presence in Kosovo. Additionally, Council members have confirmed their interest in adjusting the operational role of the United Nations in the light of the evolving circumstances.

Italy fully shares the Secretary-General's assessment that

> "the objectives of the United Nations would be best obtained through an enhanced operational role for the European Union in the area of the rule of law under the umbrella of the United Nations, headed by my Special Representative". (*S/2008/354, para. 13*)

The European Union is ready to play that role in Kosovo. It will complement the work of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security and make available its resources and long-standing expertise in the Balkans.

Significantly, just today, the European Council concluded as follows — I will quote just a few excerpts:

> "[T]he European Union remains committed to playing a leading role in ensuring the stability of Kosovo ... . The European Union welcomes the [United Nations Secretary-General's] report on UNMIK [the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo] and ... his intention to reconfigure the international civil presence in Kosovo. This would facilitate the deployment of EULEX Kosovo [the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo] throughout Kosovo".

With the European Union enabled to play an enhanced role in Kosovo through the EULEX mission, within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999), it will be possible to achieve major progress in the field of minority rights with specific regard to the Serb minority in Kosovo, including protection of its religious and cultural heritage.

The European Union must develop its role in areas of the police, justice and customs. At the same time, the United Nations should redesign its role while preserving certain fundamental functions, such as that of facilitating the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, so that solutions may be found to pending issues.

Italy reaffirms its commitment to contributing to the international effort in Kosovo and to regional stability. We will continue to work with the United Nations to be one of the main contributors to the Kosovo Force, and we favour an enhanced role for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In addition, we will be one of the main participants in EULEX since we firmly believe that a stronger European Union role in Kosovo will pave the way towards the future integration of this country within the EU.

I would like to conclude by quoting Benjamin Disraeli: "Success is the child of audacity". Let all of us around this table be audacious, supporting the way forward as outlined by the Secretary-General, in order to safeguard and consolidate peace and stability and to give Kosovo, Serbia and the whole region a chance to move forward towards a more stable and prosperous future in the European Union.

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his presence in this Chamber and recognize the importance of the report that he has just presented to us (S/2008/354). We would also like to welcome the President of Serbia, Mr. Boris Tadić, and the President of Kosovo, Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu, and to thank them for their respective statements.

Before getting into the subject at hand today, related to the future of Kosovo, I would like to highlight two subjects that are particularly important to Panama. I would like to say first that Panama would have preferred that the differences between Serbia and Kosovo had been addressed in a different way. However, Panama recognizes that it is the responsibility and the capability of the Secretary-General to implement the mandates given to him by the Security Council and, accordingly, to adjust those mandates as the circumstances on the ground continue to change. Secondly, we would emphasize the preponderant role to be played by regional organizations in the resolution of issues being dealt with by this Council.

Referring now to the substance of this issue, we cannot deny that the reality on the ground in Kosovo today is very different from the reality that existed when the Security Council approved resolution 1244 (1999) without an end date. Not only have we now witnessed Kosovo's declaration of independence and its subsequent recognition by a significant number of countries, including some members of this Council, but also, less than a week ago, with the support of the broad majority of the Kosovars, a constitution came into force which bestowed the State powers upon Kosovo and which, in addition, invites the European Union to assume a supervisory role in the establishment of the rule of law in the country.

Moreover, the European Union, as the major regional organization with respect to this issue, has played an important role in Kosovo since resolution 1244 (1999) came into force and has acted in accordance with the operative part of that document. Moreover, and due to the changing situation on the ground, the European Union has made public its intention to play a greater role in Kosovo and to progressively assume, through the European Union

Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo), part of the mandate that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has seen fit to give to it. Furthermore, the role of NATO as a guarantor of the security of Kosovo and trainer of the multi-ethnic Kosovo security force is also to be borne in mind here.

In these circumstances, we support the proposals of the Secretary-General to adapt the UNMIK format to the current reality as well as the intention of the European Union to assume, as has been deemed appropriate by the Secretary-General, part of the responsibilities of the United Nations in Kosovo.

This approach is particularly appropriate and necessary in light of the inability of the Council to reach agreement on this matter and given the open-ended nature of resolution 1244 (1999). If we do not take this step and deal with the reality of this proposal, we would be ignoring our primary mandate to ensure international peace and security. Instead, we would be prioritizing political questions of a national character.

Finally, we would like to make it clear that all executive action, be it on the part of UNMIK, EULEX or the Kosovar authorities, must guarantee the security of the whole Kosovo community, including minority communities.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2008/354) and for what he has told us with regard to the future of the United Nations presence in Kosovo. I also welcome Mr. Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, and Mr. Sejdiu, President of the Republic of Kosovo, both of whom we listened to with great attention.

We are meeting today soon after Kosovo, on 15 June, ended a process that had begun in 1999, with the entry into force of its constitution and 41 major laws. We welcome the entry into force of these texts, which will provide the new State with a legal framework that is in conformity with European standards and values and which offers a protective framework to all communities living in Kosovo, including the Serb community.

The independence of Kosovo, which came about last 17 February, is the fruit of a long process. France, followed by the great majority of its partners in the European Union, immediately recognized the new State of Kosovo. We are aware of the diverse reactions that we have seen since the independence of Kosovo on the part of the international community. However, there is a new reality here that must be taken into account by everyone.

Apart from questions of principle with regard to status, an objective assessment shows that over the four months since independence the pessimistic scenarios predicted by some have not come to pass. On the contrary, what we see is a security situation that is generally calm and institutions that are working in a satisfactory manner within a democratic framework.

This positive development of the situation has been made possible by the international civil and military presence through its efforts to build Kosovo's institutions — over the past nine years to be sure — and through its stabilizing action on the ground during the crucial period that has just passed.

But what has been achieved is still fragile. The future of Kosovo and the region faces numerous uncertainties. In this new environment, it is essential to maintain an international presence, which will contribute to building a democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo. In that regard, the Secretary-General has shouldered his responsibilities as entrusted to him by resolution 1244 (1999). He has acted in a spirit of transparency and dialogue while ensuring that he consulted all the stakeholders concerned at an early stage, first and foremost Pristina and Belgrade. I would especially like to thank him for the care he has taken to come here today personally to inform the Security Council about his plans for reconfiguration.

In his approach, the Secretary-General has demonstrated an irreproachable concern for impartiality as regards the mandate conferred upon him by the Security Council. The priority goals he has set — maintaining stability and security and preserving the work done by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) over the past nine years — are beyond question.

With regard to implementing the reconfiguration of UNMIK that he has set out, the Secretary-General should be able to count on the assistance of the entire international community. I would like to assure him of the full support of France. Like all other members of the Security Council, we are determined to do everything within our power to ensure that the era that is dawning for the people of Kosovo will contribute to the irreversible return of peace and stability in the entire Western Balkans.

UNMIK should therefore continue its mission in a new context, taking into account the necessary operational changes that must be made in order for it to best carry out the functions entrusted to it. It can count on the full cooperation of the European Union in that effort, as has just been confirmed by the European Council. The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo), which is currently being deployed, is in particular prepared to take on an increased operational role within the framework defined by the Secretary-General, in full conformity with international law and in the context of resolution 1244 (1999).

However, as beneficial as its influence may be, the international presence can accomplish nothing without the will of the Serb and Kosovar peoples to resolve their differences through dialogue and to preserve the possibility of a common future without recourse to violence. We are pleased to see that both the Albanian and Serb populations of Kosovo have not followed extremists on either side, with the vast majority continuing their commitment to a peaceful resolution of the differences between the communities.

Kosovo's population and authorities have shown a responsible attitude that will contribute to gradually enabling Kosovo to assume its place in the international community. Their commitment to the rule of law, their keenness to build a multi-ethnic State that respects minorities, their desire to foster friendly links with their neighbours and their pro-European commitment are all strong commitments that should of course be fully implemented. We very much appreciate the commitment of the President of Kosovo, as reiterated before the Council today by Mr. Sejdiu, to continue to cooperate closely with the United Nations to that end.

In the face of unfortunate developments, the Serb people could have given in to national passions and turned in on themselves. To the contrary, they have shown that they posses the necessary courage and clear-sightedness by twice, on 3 February and 11 May 2008, manifesting their clear support for democratic and pro-European forces.

In that regard, allow me once again to welcome the ongoing commitment of President Tadić, which has been reiterated numerous times before the Security Council, to link his country's future to a process of integration into the European Union. In our view, it is certain that Serbia will become a member of the European Union. It is their calling and our hope.

The signing, on 29 April 2008, of the Stabilization and Association Agreement was the first step on the road towards Europe. We continue to believe that Serbia's path towards the European Union, including candidate status, can be speeded up. France, which will assume the presidency of the European Union on 1 July 2008, intends to add significant momentum to that process by offering Serbia clear prospects.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that the European Union is fully aware of its responsibilities as it supports resolving the issue of Kosovo and helping Kosovo to overcome the obstacles in the way of stable and prosperous future for all the Western Balkans. It is in that spirit that we have deployed EULEX. It is in that spirit too that, in the months to come, we shall try to make progress in building a common future for Serbs and Kosovars in the context of the European Union.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report (S/2008/354) on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We welcome the participation in today's meeting by President Tadić of the Republic of Serbia and are grateful for his analysis. We also listened attentively to the speech delivered by Mr. Sejdiu, although it is obvious that his opinions seriously contradict provisions requiring respect for international law and, in particular, the provisions of resolution 1244 (1999).

Russia's approach to the current situation in and around Kosovo is based on the need to strictly adhere to resolution 1244 (1999) and the UNMIK mandate approved by the Security Council in that resolution. We are convinced that the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence and its recognition by some States runs counter to international law, especially the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and resolution 1244 (1999) and other decisions of the Security Council.

As the Secretary-General clearly states in his report, resolution 1244 (1999) remains fully in force. Therefore, the Special Representative of the Secretary-

General and the United Nations mission in Kosovo, which the Special Representative heads, must carry out the functions and responsibilities entrusted to them. These include ensuring that the rights and security of national minorities are preserved and achieving in the province the democratic standards established by the international community.

We consider unlawful both the deployment without the appropriate approval of the Security Council of the so-called European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, which has already begun, and the establishment of the International Steering Group. That runs counter to resolution 1244 (1999) and the agreed principles for a resolution of the issue of Kosovo.

We are also perplexed at the behaviour of Mr. Pieter Feith, who recently said that as of 15 June the administration of Kosovo will be based on the Kosovo constitution and that the role of the main international representative in the province will belong to him. That clumsy attempt to assume for himself the functions of the main international representative in Kosovo runs counter to paragraph 6 of resolution 1244 (1999), which stipulates that that role actually belongs to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

We also find unacceptable any actions aimed at the transfer of functions or property from UNMIK to the European Union mission or the international civil representative, who has no legitimate status. The attempt by former UNMIK leadership to reconfigure the mission by bypassing the Security Council has done damage to the prestige of the United Nations. The activities of former Special Representative of the Secretary-General Rücker and his deputy Larry Rossin were in total contradiction with the norms of behaviour that international servants are required to adhere to in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Any attempt to reorganize the international civil presence in Kosovo while deliberately concealing information from the Security Council is unacceptable. We request that the Secretariat regularly provide members of the Security Council with detailed information on all aspects of UNMIK's activities.

With regard to the sad legacy left by UNMIK's former leadership, we must recall the events that took place in northern Mitrovica on 17 March this year. Those events are mentioned in paragraph 6 of the report before the Council. However, nothing is said about the results of the investigation carried out by the Secretariat at the request of at least two Members of the United Nations, namely, Serbia and Ukraine. We insist that an appropriate report be submitted to the Security Council in the nearest future.

We hope that UNMIK's new leadership will learn from what has happened and will act in an unbiased manner, as is appropriate for United Nations officials, and strictly within the framework of the mission's mandate based on resolution 1244 (1999).

The Kosovo Force acting in the province under the aegis of the United Nations must also strictly adhere to its mandate approved in resolution 1244 (1999). Any arbitrary interpretation of this mandate would be unacceptable.

We are concerned by the recent actions of the Ministers of Defence of the States members of NATO seeking to directly involve the Kosovo Force in the mission to train the so-called Kosovo security force. In general, we welcome the stabilizing role of the NATO-led Kosovo Force. At the same time, if a decision is taken that NATO should be involved in the process of training the Kosovo security force, then NATO will have stepped beyond the mandate of the international military presence as approved by the Security Council.

Having studied the report of the Secretary-General, we do not agree with everything stated there. In paragraph 5 the report states that the Kosovo Serbs, after the unilateral declaration of independence, "took measures that pose serious challenges to the role of UNMIK in Kosovo". At the same time, we do not see any assessment of the actions of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo, which have openly spoken of their intention to curtail their cooperation with UNMIK. Yet, what is at stake here is the real ability of the international civil presence to fulfil the main elements of its mandate, such as maintaining law and order and preserving social and ethno-confessional peace in the province.

When there is any threat to UNMIK personnel or any attempt to block their work, we expect that the Secretary-General, together with the Kosovo Force leadership, will take the necessary steps that are provided for in resolution 1244 (1999) to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and that the Secretary-General will immediately inform the Security Council of any violations of the obligations established by resolution 1244 (1999).

In the report, the Secretary-General noted the intentions of the interim Kosovo Albanian authorities to significantly violate provisions of paragraph 7 of resolution 1244 (1999). Paragraph 7 of the report reads in part:

> "the government of Kosovo has indicated that it would welcome a continued United Nations presence in Kosovo provided that it carries out only limited residual tasks".

And paragraph 9 reads in part:

> "the government of Kosovo has passed legislation that comes into force 15 June that effectively seeks to assume tasks and competencies that have been carried out by pillar IV [of UNMIK]".

Unfortunately, those violations are treated as valid in the report. Thus, in paragraph 10, reference is made to a "new reality in Kosovo", although it is the responsibility of the Secretariat leadership to ensure that Security Council decisions are implemented and to inform the Council of their violation. In fact, we have seen a serious violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations that may have extremely negative consequences for the development of the situation in various regions of the world and, indeed, for the role of the United Nations in conflict resolution.

We would like to confirm our principled position regarding UNMIK reconfiguration. We believe that, after receiving clear approval from the parties — in particular from Belgrade — for the proposals of the Secretary-General on transforming the international civil presence in Kosovo, the Council cold promptly take the appropriate decision. Any steps to bypass the Council would be a violation of the Charter, no matter when they are taken.

To that end, we expect that the Secretary-General will be guided in his actions by the provisions of the Charter and by the existing mandate as contained in resolution 1244 (1999) and that he will refrain from any independent action not sanctioned by the Security Council to reconfigure UNMIK.

We believe that today's Council meeting does not signify the end of the Security Council's consideration of the issue of UNMIK. This discussion, in fact, is just a first step in the process of finding possible solutions to the issue by the Council. To that end, we call on the Secretary-General to continue consultations with the parties and with Council members on future UNMIK parameters.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate of the Council. I thank the Secretary-General for his participation and for his personal presentation of his report on the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (S/2008/354). My delegation also welcomes the participation of His Excellency Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, and Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu in the Council's meeting today.

The position of the Government of Viet Nam concerning the issue of Kosovo reflects our respect for the most fundamental principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Our principled position remains unchanged.

My delegation has carefully studied the report of the Secretary-General. We share his view that recent events in Kosovo have posed significant challenges to the ability of UNMIK to exercise its administrative authority and that there is a pressing need for a consensual solution that preserves peace and security in Kosovo.

It is the view of my delegation that, as the legal framework for the international civil presence in Kosovo was provided for by resolution 1244 (1999) and as its format, in the form of UNMIK, was determined by the Council on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document S/1999/672, any change or reconfiguration of the international civil presence in Kosovo will require a new decision of the Council, in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999), as well as the consent of all parties concerned.

Reaffirming Viet Nam's consistent position that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States must be fully respected, we call upon Belgrade and Pristina to refrain from actions that would endanger peace and lead to violence or jeopardize security in Kosovo and in the region. We urge both sides to resume dialogue and negotiations aimed at achieving a comprehensive and lasting solution to the issue of Kosovo in the interest of peace, security and stability in the Balkan region and in Europe at large.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to commend the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General and to encourage him, in coordination with existing mechanisms, to engage both parties in diplomatic efforts with a view to ensuring the legitimate rights and interests of all communities in Kosovo and to facilitate the dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Allow me to conclude by reiterating Viet Nam's support for the central role of the United Nations in promoting dialogue and the reconciliation process and in maintaining peace and security in Kosovo and in the Balkans.

Mr. Grauls (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Allow me too to welcome among us the Secretary-General, the President of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Boris Tadić, and the President of the Republic of Kosovo, Mr. Fatmir Sedjiu.

I would like to briefly highlight three points to which my delegation attaches special importance. First, apart from the incident in which a member of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) lost his life, the situation in Kosovo has in general remained calm, including after the declaration of independence of 17 February. In that context, we welcome the responsible attitude of the parties concerned.

Secondly, the international presence and its composition are at the heart of the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/354) and of our discussions today. Belgium appreciates the Secretary-General's efforts to adapt the United Nations presence to a reality that, as highlighted in his report, has changed radically. The proposed reconfiguration is necessary. More than that, it is in conformity with resolution 1244 (1999). It is fully within the purview of the Secretary-General. We can therefore support it. Now, it is important that this reconfiguration be implemented rapidly so that the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo can make its contribution to the establishment and reinforcement of the rule of law throughout Kosovo, which is in the interest of all of Kosovo's citizens.

For my third point, I would like to stress the words, "throughout the whole of Kosovo". In this context, Belgium has been reflecting on the creation of parallel municipal authorities in majority Serb areas and the announcement of a Serb parliament in Kosovo. This seems to run counter to the legislative framework defined by UNMIK and supported by the international community.

What has already transpired clearly shows that it is in the interests of Pristina and Belgrade to establish a good working relationship; in that respect, the letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the two parties indicates the path to follow. We call upon both parties to establish this relationship and to give it some substance, bearing in mind their future which, need we say, is solidly in Europe.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to once again repeat its satisfaction with the work accomplished by UNMIK and Special Representative Joachim Rücker over the past few years.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the presence among us today of Presidents Boris Tadić and Fatmir Sejdiu. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his presence and for the report (S/2008/354) which he presented to us on the future of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in Kosovo.

In its nine years of operation in Kosovo, UNMIK has helped Kosovo establish and consolidate its Provisional Institutions of Self-Government as democratic and responsible institutions, and to promote a viable economy. Nevertheless, in spite of these undeniable efforts and achievements in many areas, much remains to be done. Here, we need to see the process of reconciliation and the complete integration of the Kosovo communities. This is a major challenge.

The new situation prevailing since the declaration of independence of Kosovo is now a given fact, the principal acts of which are — and previous speakers have already recalled them — the promulgation of the constitution, which entered into force on 15 June; the wish of the Kosovar authorities for the United Nations to carry out residual and limited tasks; the willingness of the European Union to deploy personnel in the police, justice and customs spheres; and the disengagement of the European Commission with respect to financing economic reconstruction, which had been under UNMIK authority, and the decision of the authorities in Pristina to assume responsibility in this area.

It is in this new context that the debate takes place on the nature and appropriateness of the international presence in Kosovo, including on the future of UNMIK. This merits particular attention by the Security Council. It is important to arrive at a compromise on these crucial issues so as to maintain peace and stability in Kosovo and in the region.

My delegation would like, in that regard, to thank the Secretary-General for having taken the initiative to undertake consultations with all parties with a view to proceedings, within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999), to a reconfiguration of the international presence in Kosovo. We endorse and support this approach because it allows us, inter alia, to preserve the important achievements of the United Nations and of the international community in Kosovo and to adapt their presence to the evolving situation on the ground. We invite all parties and the entire international community to cooperate with the Secretary-General within the framework of this new approach so as to ensure in Kosovo, and in the Balkans as a whole, a prosperous future in peace, good-neighbourliness and mutual understanding.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): Let me join others in thanking the Secretary-General for his briefing on his proposals and for his report on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (S/2008/354). We would also like to welcome Mr. Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia, and Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu and to thank them for their statements.

We have consistently underlined that the Council must always inform itself fully and build a common and shared understanding on how evolving developments impact the work and policy of the interim administrator of Kosovo, namely UNMIK. We are aware that operational adjustments and fine tuning, in response to developments and changes on the ground, are inevitable in any United Nations mission, including in Kosovo. In the case of the latter, these efforts have to be consistent with the operational framework established under resolution 1244 (1999). We appreciate, therefore, the extraordinary and thought-through efforts of the Secretary-General to employ his good offices with the parties and key stakeholders in order to identify a status-neutral solution which would address the current challenge and manage the situation effectively on the ground. Indonesia is mindful of the importance of the package of ideas communicated by the Secretary-General on UNMIK's reconfiguration — moving the region in the direction of peace and security, while ensuring the legacy and continuous role of the United Nations.

Synergy in the efforts between the United Nations and the European Union (EU) merits our support. The European Union's efforts to play a greater operational role within the status-neutral framework should be encouraged and supported, as this will provide further stability to the region. Indeed, such a role puts into effect the recently and often discussed theme of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, as envisioned in Chapter VIII of the Charter. It is our view that regional organizations can provide meaningful and constructive contributions to address regional issues. This has been the case in Africa, the Americas and Asia, and it applies equally to Europe.

Elsewhere, however, synergy of efforts with the United Nations is key. For this reason, it is important to establish a clear organizational linkage between the EU office, the international civilian operation and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The Council in this regard needs to stay abreast of the activities of the EU and the international civil operation on the ground, as well as the regular briefings of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the written reports of the Secretary-General.

Once again, the two entities have to work within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999). I will share some final thoughts before I conclude. We wish to underline the fact that resolution 1244 (1999) remains in force. Dialogue and negotiation remain essential for the resolution of the question of final status. Indonesia has and continues to maintain that position. The Security Council must collectively transmit a clear and unified message to all the parties to continue to exercise restraint, and it must exercise its leadership on the issue. We believe that the Secretary-General should continue to engage all parties in the region to find a mutually acceptable solution in line with resolution 1244 (1999).

Finally, I conclude by thanking the Secretary-General and his team for their relentless efforts, and the personnel of UNMIK for their continued dedication and their pursuit of peace and security in line with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Mr. Jurica (Croatia): First of all, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his report (S/2008/354). We would also like to welcome His Excellency President Boris Tadić of the Republic of

Serbia and His Excellency President Fatmir Sejdiu of the Republic of Kosovo.

On 15 June, the constitution of the Republic of Kosovo came into force. We congratulate the people of Kosovo on having adopted one of the most progressive of constitutions, one that contains the strongest internationally recognized human rights protection mechanisms and includes European best practices for multi-ethnic protection. The constitution's adoption and entry into force reaffirm Kosovo as a true country in Europe and Kosovo as a truly European country. We hope that the constitution's implementation and the adherence to its most advanced provisions will be a constant affirmation of this.

After long hardship and nine years of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) we wish the people of Kosovo every success in administering their own lives. We wish them stability, security and prosperity, as well as quick integration into the United Nations in due course and into other international forums and, naturally, into the Euro-Atlantic community. We have repeatedly reiterated our strong conviction that all countries of South-Eastern Europe belong to the European and Euro-Atlantic family, and we stand ready to offer them our experience and know-how as they travel their path.

However, the entry into force of the Kosovo constitution effectively removes UNMIK's powers as interim civil administration in Kosovo as of 15 June of this year, and that is the main reason that we are gathered in this Chamber today. Since 1999, the United Nations, through its UNMIK presence in Kosovo, was very successful at administering Kosovo for the benefit of its inhabitants. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate everyone who was a part of this effort and who put energy into building something that today we can claim to be an overwhelmingly positive United Nations legacy in Kosovo. In this context, let me underline the role that the outgoing Special Representative, Joachim Rücker, played in Kosovo and to thank him for his work.

We commend the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for displaying leadership, and especially for bringing all sides together in order to find solutions, which not everyone supports fully but can live with, all in line with the United Nations status neutrality and with resolution 1244 (1999).

We applaud the Secretary-General's vision in not stopping the river of history from flowing, while addressing the major worries of those concerned. We fully support the plan he has presented in his report, within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999), which enables him to do so.

The new reality in Kosovo and its future are clear. We welcome the readiness of the United Nations to carry out its residual tasks in Kosovo and offer our support to the European Union (EU), which has expressed its readiness to play an enhanced role in the rule of law through its European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo). The prompt and full establishment of EULEX in the entire territory of Kosovo is the best guarantee that the successful United Nations legacy in Kosovo will be preserved.

Finally, we call on the authorities both in Belgrade and in Pristina — and, even more important, all citizens of Kosovo, regardless of their ethnicity — to continue cooperating with the United Nations and the European Union in order to ensure the continued stability and security of Kosovo, neighbouring countries and the region. This is crucial if we are to see the rest of the South-Eastern Europe fully integrated into a stable and prosperous European future.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): May I join others in welcoming the presence of the Secretary-General at today's debate. We are grateful that he is here at this discussion to present his intentions in person.

I also welcome President Sejdiu and congratulate him on the important progress that he and his Government have made since Kosovo's declaration of independence, especially in adopting priority legislation on the protection of minorities and enshrining it in Kosovo's new constitution, which came into force just a few days ago. There are obviously many challenges ahead for Kosovo, and the United Kingdom stands ready to support and assist President Sejdiu as part of an international effort towards stability, democracy, multi-ethnicity and prosperity in Kosovo and throughout the Balkans.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to President Tadić. We understand the difficulty of this issue for Serbia. Our common goal is stability in Kosovo and the whole of the Balkans and to support the European perspective of Serbia and Kosovo alike. We are concerned only with dealing with the practical realities and with creating a stable, multi-ethnic Kosovo in which all communities can live in democracy and peace.

I would like also to pay tribute to the work of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) since 1999. Kosovo has come a long way, and UNMIK deserves substantial credit. We would particularly like to thank and pay tribute to the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Joachim Rücker, for his tireless and principled work in testing circumstances, under criticism from certain Member States and, at times, without the full support he might have expected.

We take note of the Secretary-General's report (S/2008/354), announcing his intent to reconfigure the international civil presence in Kosovo. We recognize that the Secretary-General has had to balance a number of difficult questions since Kosovo's declaration of independence. We agree with him on the practical necessity of this reconfiguration in the light of the new reality in Kosovo and to meet the new operational requirements.

The proposed reconfiguration does not as far as we, the United Kingdom, believe it should, but we recognize that there is a range of views in the Council that the Secretary-General has sought to accommodate. And whatever the United Kingdom view — or the views of other delegations on the Council — in the absence of an agreed view of the Council, the exact disposition of UNMIK in Kosovo is the Secretary-General's decision to make, and we will respect the decisions set out in his report.

In his statement, President Tadić asked for more time for dialogue and to await a satisfactory agreement, including with Belgrade. Sadly, we have heard this before. During former President Ahtisaari's work in fulfilling resolution 1244 (1999), the Government of Serbia, under Prime Minister Koštunica, refused to engage with him or cooperate. The Serbian Government then demanded that nothing be agreed without Belgrade's agreement.

Life has moved on, and while some in Serbia have been left behind, we welcome the fact of the outcome of the latest Serbian elections. The United Nations, certainly, has to keep up with the practical realities.

President Tadić also said that paragraphs 5 and 19 of resolution 1244 (1999) make clear that only the Security Council has the power to make changes to the international presences in Kosovo. We agree that the Security Council alone can change or revoke resolution 1244 (1999), which is why it remains in force. But there is nothing in paragraphs 5 or 19 of that resolution that defines the configuration of the international presences. In any case, the configuration of the international presences has evolved and changed several times since resolution 1244 (1999) was adopted, through decisions taken by the previous Secretary-General.

Reconfiguration in Kosovo will allow the relevant regional body, the European Union (EU), to play a greater role, in accordance with the spirit of resolution 1809 (2008), unanimously adopted by the Council just two months ago. It would also free up the United Nations to take on activity elsewhere.

It is now important for the Secretary-General to provide clarity to the people of Kosovo and to implement the United Nations configuration in order for the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and its police component to deploy over the rest of the summer, avoiding any gaps in security.

NATO has also made clear its continued readiness to contribute to the implementation of security arrangements in Kosovo. Our thanks go to the Kosovo Force for its work in ensuring peace and security there.

Mr. La Yifan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China would, first of all, like to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his briefing. We appreciate his efforts to safeguard peace and stability in Kosovo and in the Balkans. We have also listened attentively to the statements made by His Excellency Mr. Boris Tadić, President of Serbia, and Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu.

The overall situation in Kosovo has been stable in the past four years, but it remains tense and sensitive. That fragile situation affects the peace and stability of the Balkans and Europe as a whole. China hopes that all parties will view the relevant issues from a broader and longer-term perspective, and avoid any statements and actions that could lead to tension and endanger the peace and stability of the region.

China has always maintained that all parties should adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the

Security Council and respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries. Likewise, China has always maintained that a final resolution of the status of Kosovo should be a settlement acceptable to both sides reached through negotiations. We support further efforts to find a proper solution for Kosovo's status through negotiations.

Nine years ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 1244 (1999), which has become the legal basis for settling the issue of Kosovo. Since that time, Kosovo has indeed experienced many changes; but the basis for the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) has not changed.

Moreover, China has taken note of the observations of the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 17 of his report (S/2008/354), namely, that events in Kosovo have had, and will continue to have, a significant operational impact on the functioning of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and that, after 15 June, UNMIK will no longer be able to perform effectively the vast majority of its tasks as an interim administration.

We attach great importance to the Secretary-General's proposal regarding UNMIK's reconfiguration. We believe that the Secretary-General should continue to maintain close communications with the relevant parties concerned in order that the reconfiguration plan will be more reliable and feasible and focused on a proper solution to the question of Kosovo.

We understand and encourage the intention of the European Union (EU) to enhance its role in the Western Balkans. We hope that the EU will play a positive role in the framework of resolution 1244 (1999), support the work of UNMIK and, together with the United Nations, maintain the peace and stability of the region.

Mr. Weisleder (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are very grateful to you, Mr. President, for convening this very important meeting. We welcome the Secretary-General and would like to thank him for his presence here today and for the report (S/2008/354) he has provided to us. We would also like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Boris Tadić, President of Serbia, and Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu, President of Kosovo.

The Secretary-General's efforts to preserve peace in Kosovo and in the region in general are very commendable. We encourage him to continue those efforts. It also seems to us to be of the utmost importance to do everything possible to protect the human rights of all the minority inhabitants living together in Kosovo. We would like to ask the Secretary-General to focus in particular on the efforts needed to bring about the return of displaced persons and the normalization of their living conditions.

We also support the Secretary-General's proposal for the reconfiguration of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in the context of resolution 1244 (1999) and the powers it confers and the limits it places on him. Like other delegations, we too are of the view that the resolution continues to be in force and that it should continue to be the framework within which UNMIK and the United Nations operate in Kosovo until the Council adopts a different resolution. We believe that it is within the power of the Secretary-General to propose the reconfiguration he has made, which is now being implemented.

We would like to thank the European Union for its readiness to assume additional tasks and responsibilities in Kosovo. That should always be done within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999) and, as stated in the report of the Secretary-General, in coordination with the United Nations and under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Kosovo.

Finally, it is appropriate to call upon all the communities that live together in Kosovo to make their contribution to maintaining calm and to work together constructively towards ending the conflict in the framework of a political process. As in previous occasions, Costa Rica hopes that the past, which has unfortunately been very painful for the region, can be overcome through a future of well-being, peace and tranquillity for the peoples of Kosovo and the Balkans in general.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

I would like to welcome — this time in my national capacity — the Secretary-General and Presidents Tadić and Sejdiu.

I have to empathize with your predicament, Mr. Secretary-General. I feel your pain. You have heard opposition from some members to your reconfiguration plan. Most members have endorsed your plan. Faced with the dramatic developments in Kosovo that you have described and a Security Council that has been unable to react to those developments, I understand that you had to act. I understand further that resolution 1244 (1999) gives you that discretion. Just as resolution 1244 (1999) was the basis for your predecessor's creation of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), it is the basis for your reconfiguration of UNMIK to ensure that the United Nations presence in Kosovo remains relevant and on top of such dramatic changes on the ground.

Against that backdrop, the United States appreciates the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/354) on the reconfiguration of the United Nations presence in Kosovo. The issue before us is whether the United Nations presence in Kosovo should remain static and incapable of evolving to deal with the reality on the ground, or whether it should adapt and adjust appropriately to recent events and remain relevant. I would like to make four points in response to the Secretary-General's report.

First, the United States believes that the Secretary-General has discretion to reconfigure UNMIK. We support the initiative he has taken to do so. As I will describe in a moment, the United States has some concerns about that initiative; but, on balance, that initiative may prove to be the most practical way forward.

The Secretary-General's conclusion that the United Nations must adapt to the evolving situation on the ground should surprise no one. As far back as 2005, the then United Nations envoy Kai Eide reported that the Organization's leverage in Kosovo was declining and that new international actors, in particular the European Union (EU), would need to play a leading international role. The United Nations administered Kosovo for nine years, much longer than anyone imagined when the Council adopted resolution 1244 (1999) in June 1999. As the years have passed, the Secretary-General has continually adjusted the United Nations presence in Kosovo and its relationship to other international organizations. The fact that Kosovo's democratic and multi-ethnic Government is now ready to govern is a testament to the success of the United Nations in institution-building.

The Secretary-General's continued cooperation with international organizations, particularly the European Union, will ensure that there is appropriate oversight by the international community and that Kosovo continues its progress in building a more stable society.

My second point is that the United States finds certain elements in the Secretary-General's report to be troubling. The Secretary-General has proposed a new round of United Nations dialogue with Belgrade to discuss institutional arrangements within the State of Kosovo. We believe that such dialogue should always be encouraged, particularly if United Nations officials can facilitate the support of the Government in Belgrade for multi-ethnic institutions in Kosovo. Nonetheless, any institutional arrangement for Kosovo must be discussed with and agreed to by the Government in Pristina. This dialogue must be transparent with regard to both its agenda and its objectives and must be thoroughly coordinated with the major international stakeholders who will assume responsibility for security and stability in Kosovo.

We understand the concern of President Tadić for Kosovo Serbs, who of course remain Serb citizens within Kosovo. I hope that it is that concern that motivates him to engage in this dialogue on Kosovo's institutions rather than a desire to undo or undermine their reconfiguration.

I also note with concern language in the Secretary-General's report that could be construed as proposing a more robust and long-term United Nations role in Kosovo than is warranted. Our view is that the Secretary-General should have acknowledged more explicitly that the United Nations can no longer play such a major role in Kosovo under the present circumstances.

Thirdly, I would note that the Council should be encouraged by the rapid progress that Kosovo has achieved since independence. That progress justifies the Secretary-General's decision to reconfigure the United Nations presence. We are pleased to see that Kosovo's transition to independence has gone more smoothly than some sceptics had expected. Kosovo's multi-ethnic Government has enthusiastically begun to implement the minority rights framework proposed by former United Nations Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari. The Kosovo Assembly has adopted key laws to implement the Ahtisaari plan in areas such as decentralization of local government and protection of cultural heritage and the rights of ethnic communities and their members. Kosovo's new constitution meets the highest international human rights standards and incorporates rights and protections contemplated in the Ahtisaari plan.

Nevertheless, serious problems remain, and Kosovo has much work to do to fight corruption, implement market reforms and build better institutions. But the political maturity shown by President Sedjiu and other Kosovar leaders, particularly through their words and actions to reach out to Kosovo's minorities, demonstrates that Kosovo has a bright future.

My fourth and final point is that Belgrade's efforts to promote ethnic separation in Kosovo threaten to reverse the progress that the United Nations and the people of Kosovo have achieved. The Secretary-General's report correctly notes that Serbia will continue to have a relationship with Kosovo Serbs. Indeed, the Ahtisaari plan provided for that relationship to continue and proposed a transparent mechanism for Belgrade to support Kosovo Serb communities. But Belgrade has openly decided to use that relationship to discourage Kosovo Serbs from cooperating or even talking with their Kosovo Albanian neighbours.

On 22 March, Serbia's Minister for Kosovo publicly characterized Belgrade's plan as the functional division of Serbs and Kosovo Albanians in Kosovo. To implement that plan, Belgrade sponsored parallel municipal elections in Kosovo, which the United Nations correctly declared illegal and contrary to resolution 1244 (1999). Belgrade also pressured Serbs to withdraw from Kosovo's multi-ethnic institutions, which were established under United Nations auspices. Belgrade is now supporting a Serb parliamentary assembly in Kosovo in an attempt to solidify parallel institutions. Belgrade has also tried to extend indirect control over northern Kosovo, where Serb-instigated violence resulted in the death of a United Nations police officer in March.

Such policies of ethnic partition and separation run contrary to the principles of the United Nations Charter and threaten to undermine nine years of efforts by the international community to promote multi-ethnic governance in Kosovo. The United States has long believed that Serbia, a great nation and a regional leader, has a bright and prosperous future in Euro-Atlantic institutions. We therefore encourage Belgrade's new Government to encourage Kosovo Serbs to participate in multi-ethnic institutions in Kosovo.

In conclusion, as the period of United Nations administration over Kosovo comes to a close, we look forward to working with the Secretary-General to protect the positive legacy of the United Nations of peace and democracy in Kosovo. I want to end by congratulating the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zannier, and to thank Mr. Rücker and all the men and women who work with him for their service in Kosovo.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

The President of the Republic of Serbia, His Excellency Mr. Boris Tadić, has asked to make a statement, and I give him the floor.

President Tadić: Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity to comment, at the end of this meeting, on the reactions to my statement and the statements by Mr. Sedjiu and the Secretary-General.

First of all, there are no multi-ethnic institutions in Kosovo and Metohija, even today. There are only a few Serbs who participate in those institutions, and if the question is, who is supporting those Serbs, I answer that it is only the members of the Albanian Government in Kosovo and Metohija. Belgrade is not preventing Serbs from participating in those institutions. There is no confidence in them because of the lack of results they have achieved. If the question is how many Serbs have returned to their homes after the adoption of the Kosovo constitution and the declaration of independence, my answer is crystal clear: none. If the expectation is that some Serbs will return to their own homes in the period ahead of us under these circumstances, that is not a realistic expectation.

I would like to see progress, and I am going to do everything in my power to establish the circumstances in which Serbs will return to their own homes. But the problem comes from Kosovo, its municipal institutions and its central Government. Belgrade is not the problem. Belgrade is the seat of Serbia's legitimate democracy today. We are participating in the negotiation process, and we have always been doing so since its beginning. Even though we have done so, the Kosovo Albanian delegation has avoided talking with the Belgrade delegation about the future status of Kosovo, saying only a few words about our bilateral relations after Kosovo's independence. That is not democracy. That is not a dialogue between two sides.

As I say, Belgrade is going to do everything possible in terms of improving the situation and ensuring the respect of human rights and better circumstances for all citizens of Serbia, including Kosovo. After the unilateral declaration of independence and after the adoption of the so-called constitution of Kosovo, Belgrade did not cut Kosovo off in terms of its economy, transportation and communications.

Belgrade did not act violently against Kosovo and Metohija. Belgrade is trying to do everything stipulated by the United Nations in terms of providing stability and security in Kosovo. If Mr. Sejdiu is saying that Serbia's current policy is sending our region back to the 1990s, I totally disagree. We are not making war; we are not threatening; we are trying to achieve a compromise solution. At the same time, we are respecting international law.

But this is not only about international law. If a unilateral declaration of independence and so-called Kosovo independence are going to happen, it is a problem not only for our region and my country, but also for other regions with similar problems. The Council knows that I speak the truth. This is a very dangerous precedent in terms of the stability of other regions all around the world — on all continents — with very similar problems. I ask Council members what the next case will be in the Security Council of the United Nations — it will be one very similar to the case of Kosovo.

When the Secretary-General says that this is the most complicated problem of his career, I believe him. This is indeed one of the most complicated problems in your career, Mr. Secretary-General. When Mr. Khalilzad, the Permanent Representative of the United States, says that he feels the Secretary-General's pain, I expect that Mr. Khalilzad will feel my pain as well.

I am the President of Serbia. Serbia is a legitimate democracy — a European country with a European culture which is defending its legitimate interests in a normal way: by using diplomatic tools, not by making war. We expect that our legitimate interests will be respected, not only with regard to our European future, which is not in question, but also with regard to our integrity and sovereignty. We are a normal and legitimate democracy — a European State — with our own sovereignty and integrity.

The President: I thank the President of the Republic of Serbia for his statement. Mr. Fatmir Sejdiu has asked for the floor, and I call on him now.

Mr. Sejdiu (*spoke in Albanian; English interpretation provided by the speaker*): I would like once more to emphasize that we have high regard for the Secretary-General's initiative to reconfigure the United Nations presence in Kosovo, that is, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), taking into account the common need for a limited engagement, until the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo is ready to assume responsibilities.

We have said before, and we re-emphasize, that we are fully committed to coordination and cooperation in order to successfully conclude the great story of the international community's investment for peace and stability in Kosovo. In this regard, I would like to say that we are committed, and I personally am committed, as President of the Republic of Kosovo — not as representative of the Albanians in Kosovo, but as the representative of the people and institutions of the Republic of Kosovo — to fully put into practice and implement the plan put forward by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Mr. Ahtisaari. Our commitment is to shoulder direct responsibility for the work of Kosovo's institutions.

On the day that the constitution of the Republic of Kosovo entered into force, I signed 41 laws, most of them referring to the main provisions of the Ahtisaari plan and related as well to safeguarding the interests of the minority communities.

We take this opportunity to recall that the Secretary-General spoke positively about the precise moment of Kosovo's declaration of independence and the entire period since then. Some representatives of Member States said that by its declaration of independence Kosovo was threatened and the United Nations was threatened. They also predicted that there would be a large-scale exodus from Kosovo and that bad things would happen. Just the opposite has occurred. We have shown our genuine commitment, taking a serious and mature approach. All developments in Kosovo should be treated as joint developments, which will lead to an objective perspective.

Despite this, I would like to emphasize again that, as is well known, there have been attempts on the part of Serbia to maintain tension with respect to developments in Kosovo. For example, two border crossing points were set on fire on the day of Kosovo's declaration of independence and subsequent events included the wounding of police officers from the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the death of a police officer from the Kosovo Force. I personally visited the scene of these attacks to be with the victims and to hear their concerns following their stressful experiences.

I take this opportunity to again urge the Republic of Serbia to allow the Serbs in Kosovo to live with the reality, to allow the Serbs in Kosovo to live with the reality, to allow Kosovo to become independent, prosperous and deeply committed to the integration processes within the Euro-Atlantic structures.

We therefore highly regard the special role that the United Nations, the European Union and NATO have played in Kosovo during these times, with respect to the process that we have gone through. We also express the readiness of the Kosovo institutions to responsibly continue their work in cooperation with the international presences in Kosovo, leading to a conclusion of their operations in Kosovo on the basis of principles that we have affirmed and will support in order to move forward.

The President: I thank Mr. Sejdiu for his statement.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to give the floor to the Secretary-General to make a further statement.

The Secretary-General: This has been a serious challenge for all of us. I am quite sure that everyone must have experienced pain. In that regard, I appreciate the pain felt by Their Excellencies Presidents Tadić and Sejdiu. Now, turning to our mission, my overriding priority and concern is how to bring peace and security and maintain this peace and security in the region. That is what I am going to do as Secretary-General, and I need the support, cooperation and sympathetic understanding of participants in order to do it. This is part of a broad mandate which is given to me by the Charter of the United Nations and by resolution 1244 (1999), which Security Council members adopted in 1999.

I have shared with the Security Council my assessment of the situation in Kosovo and have described my intensive efforts, with the sides and key stakeholders, to reach a compromise solution. These efforts have resulted in an idea for the international civil presence, which is before the Council today. This package is a practical and workable solution, a concrete and sustainable response to a complex and difficult situation. It is founded on the imperative, overriding need, as I have said, to maintain international peace and security and stability in Kosovo and the region, while responding and adapting to changing circumstances on the ground.

The package furthers the objectives of the United Nations in Kosovo. Its aim is to consolidate the significant achievements of nine years of interim administration. It takes into account the profoundly changed reality in Kosovo, while also addressing areas of concern for Serbia and for Kosovo's minority communities.

The package is strictly status neutral and is fully within the framework of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), which remains the legal framework for UNMIK until and unless the Security Council decides otherwise. It recognizes the importance of an enhanced role for the European Union in Kosovo as part of the European Union's efforts to promote progress and stability in the Western Balkans.

While no solution is ideal, this package is, I am convinced, the result of an effort at compromise and has benefited from extensive consultations. It is supported by all my senior advisers, who have worked tirelessly and intensively with me in its development. It is, therefore, the view of the United Nations that this package constitutes the best possible way forward to manage the situation in Kosovo. Today's meeting has provided the Security Council with an important opportunity to consider the package.

Finally, the Secretariat and I myself as Secretary-General, are ready to brief the Council on operational developments in Kosovo and to share with it the challenges on which our mission has been focusing, including the one related to Mitrovica, referred to by the representative of Russia.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5918

Security Council

Distr.: General
23 June 2008

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 5918th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 23 June 2008, at 10 a.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

> "On 23 June 2008, the Security Council, pursuant to annex II, sections A and B of resolution 1353 (2001), held its 5918th meeting in private with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force.
>
> "The Security Council and the troop-contributing countries heard a briefing under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure by Mr. Wolfgang Weisbrod-Weber, Director a.i. of the Asia and Middle East Division, Department of Peacekeeping Operations."

United Nations S/PV.5919

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5919th meeting

Monday, 23 June 2008, 6.10 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Khalilzad	(United States of America)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Grauls
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Letter dated 18 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/407)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 6.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

Letter dated 18 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/407)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Zimbabwe, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Chidyausiku (Zimbabwe) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in response to a letter dated 18 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium addressed to the President of the Security Council and contained in document S/2008/407.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. I now give the floor to Mr. Pascoe.

Mr. Pascoe: I would like to thank Council members for this opportunity to brief them on the situation in Zimbabwe. Four days before the scheduled presidential run-off election of 27 June, the situation has deteriorated to alarming levels and has reached a new degree of gravity. The withdrawal of Mr. Tsvangirai from the Friday run-off demonstrates this situation very clearly. While we have been working to improve conditions, we also do not believe conditions exist for a "free and fair" run-off election. We strongly discourage the authorities from going ahead with the run-off under these circumstances as that would only increase divisions and produce a discredited result.

In the Secretary-General's view, the situation in Zimbabwe constitutes a major challenge to regional stability in Southern Africa, not only because of its likely direct impact on the region's political and economic security and the possible displacements, but also because it creates a dangerous precedent for the political future of the continent. Since the beginning of the political impasse following the 29 March elections, the Secretary-General has expressed his concern about the process and the politically motivated violence. He has remained closely engaged with all relevant regional and international leaders to assist in a resolution of the crisis.

As a result of his meeting with President Mugabe in Rome during the World Food Summit, in which he persuaded the Government to engage and work with the United Nations, he dispatched Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Haile Menkerios to Zimbabwe with the mandate to discuss ways to improve the political climate ahead of the run-off elections.

Assistant Secretary-General Menkerios was granted broad access by the Zimbabwean authorities and met with a wide spectrum of actors and stakeholders in order to gain a balanced understanding of the situation. He met with President Mugabe; with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Labour and Social Welfare; with the Deputy Commander of the army; with the Electoral Commission; with the leaders of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara; with Mr. Simba Makoni who came third in the most recent presidential election; with civil society and church organizations; and with the heads of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and other observer missions as well as with the diplomatic community.

In his meetings with the Government, the Assistant Secretary-General's message was that the

Government has the primary responsibility to ensure the security of all citizens; that conditions for free and fair elections must exist, in particular that the violence and intimidation had to stop and violators brought to justice; that an equal playing field had to be created for both candidates and their parties; and that dialogue was critical to ending the crisis. He also pressed for the resumption of humanitarian activities.

Based on his observations, Mr. Menkerios informed the Secretary-General that conditions did not exist for free and fair elections in Zimbabwe and that no outcome of an election run under these conditions could be considered credible.

The country has experienced a staggering degree of violence, with the opposition claiming that over 80 of its supporters have been killed by supporters of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and thousands displaced from their wards. There is ample evidence that such violence has been perpetrated by a combination of State agencies — army, police, and intelligence — by war veterans and by youth militias. The Government claims that violence has also been perpetrated by MDC activists against ZANU-PF supporters. Evidence suggests that while there has been some retaliatory violence, it has been of a much lesser degree than that of the Government and its supporters.

This widespread campaign of intimidation and threat is antithetical to the very spirit of elections. Instead of openness, free competition and transparency, the current climate is one of fear, hostility and attacks on the physical integrity of Zimbabwean citizens. The violence and the displacements pose an immediate challenge to the credibility of the voting process.

It was hoped that the climate would improve with the arrival of a large number of regional and international observers, as the presence of the observers could have helped deter the violence and increase confidence. As part of its cooperation with regional organizations, the United Nations has provided logistical and technical assistance for SADC observation efforts. As a result of combined efforts, the number of observers significantly increased over those present for the first round, when SADC deployed 120 observers.

The observers were also mandated to stay in-country for a longer period of time after the election. The United Nations provided support for some 300 observers from SADC member States. As of today, 397 SADC observers have been accredited and deployed in Zimbabwe. The expected total number of SADC observers is about 430. The African Union and the Economic Community of West African States have also increased their number of observers dramatically. Initial reports by SADC and Pan-African Parliament observer missions provided first-hand accounts of politically motivated violence.

There has been growing concern that domestic observer groups would not be able to field as many observers as they did for the first round, held on 29 March, due to the restrictive provisions adopted by the authorities. One such domestic group, the Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network, suffered great restrictions in the accreditation of its observers. It has only been allowed to deploy 500 domestic observers to cover over 9,000 polling stations. The MDC candidate has little or no access to the Zimbabwean media; he is barred from freely campaigning; and it was reported that campaign buses and vehicles were seized by the State, allegedly for unlawful registration. The party's Secretary-General, Mr. Tendai Biti, remains under arrest, charged with treason. Today we heard reports that the MDC headquarters had been raided and dozens of supporters detained.

In Zimbabwe the distinction between the ruling party, Government and State institutions is blurred. The civil service, the judiciary and in particular security institutions such as the army and the police do not play a neutral role to ensure security and a peaceful atmosphere. The chiefs of security forces in Zimbabwe have on many occasions declared that they would not "allow puppets to take charge" or "salute sell-outs and agents of the West". President Mugabe himself declared that he was "prepared to go to war" if he lost and that the MDC would never be allowed to rule the country. State institutions are partisan, and not neutral effective instruments of citizenship and the rule of law.

Yesterday, opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai announced he was withdrawing from the Friday run-off election, pointing out that condition for credible elections did not exist. He argued that there is evidence of widespread State-sponsored violence, that he had been unable to campaign, that the MDC has lost confidence in the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission since the institution has been staffed with war veterans and youth militia and that the political leadership of ZANU-PF and war veterans have made public statements openly declaring that they would defy an MDC victory.

The MDC called on SADC, the African Union and the United Nations to intervene urgently to restore the rule of law, peace and conditions for a free and fair election. Mr. Tsvangirai further advised that the MDC would make public its next move on Wednesday, 25 June. In the interim, he has indicated that the MDC remains open to participating in any future elections under conditions which are consistent with SADC norms and principles governing democratic elections.

As I stated earlier, conditions for a free and fair run-off election do not exist at present. It is our view that the election should be postponed for an appropriate period. The Government must ensure that conditions are in place for a credible process to take place.

Given the gravity of the situation, the parties should immediately engage in talks to establish a period during which conditions for free and fair elections can be created. I reiterate the Secretary-General's offer of his good offices in support of such efforts, as appropriate. The United Nations is prepared to work urgently with SADC and the African Union to help resolve this political impasse. The Secretary-General's envoy, Assistant Secretary-General Menkerios, remains in the region to assist.

Africans have made very clear their concerns regarding the situation in Zimbabwe. The voice of African leaders has grown stronger, and the region is mobilizing to solve this challenging crisis. President Mbeki of South Africa, who has been mandated by SADC to mediate the crisis, has declared that the political leadership of Zimbabwe should get together and find a solution to the challenges faced by the country.

SADC Chair and Zambian President Mwanawasa has called for the postponement of elections to allow for the establishment of conditions suitable for free and fair elections in accordance with Zimbabwean law, the SADC principles and the Charter and conventions of the African Union.

Angolan President Dos Santos, the Chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, has also urged President Mugabe to observe a spirit of tolerance and respect for differences and to cease all forms of intimidation and political violence.

Furthermore, a group of 40 prominent African former heads of State and other personalities have signed an open letter calling for an end to the current political violence in Zimbabwe, declaring their concern at the reports of intimidation, harassment and violence and saying that it is vital that appropriate conditions be created so that the presidential run-off can be conducted in a peaceful, free and fair manner.

The Secretary-General recognizes the continuing efforts by SADC to facilitate a solution in Zimbabwe and the leading role that South Africa has played in this effort, and he has been encouraging and supporting these. He welcomes the decision by SADC to hold an emergency meeting on Zimbabwe and gives his support to SADC and African Union measures to address this pressing situation.

It is now time to redouble efforts to assist in facilitating the immediate start of a period for establishing conditions necessary for free and fair elections and to help restore security and the rule of law in the country. We believe it is clear that a winner-takes-all approach will not bring peace and stability to the country. All forms of violence, intimidation and obstruction must stop.

I reiterate the Secretary-General's call on both parties to resume talks immediately to seek a peaceful resolution of this crisis for the good of all Zimbabweans. Zimbabwe must have a credible process in place so that the run-off election can produce a legitimate outcome in the eyes of the Zimbabwean people and the world community.

The President: I thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing.

There are no other speakers on my list. The Security Council has this concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I invite members to a private meeting to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.

United Nations

S/PV.5920

Security Council

Distr.: General
23 June 2008

Original: English

Official communiqué of the 5920th (closed) meeting of the Security Council

Held in private at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 23 June 2008, at 6.30 p.m.

In accordance with rule 55 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the following communiqué was issued through the Secretary-General in place of a verbatim record:

> "At its 5920th meeting, held in private on 23 June 2008, the Security Council considered the item entitled 'Peace and Security in Africa'.
>
> "The President, with the consent of the Council, invited the representatives of Angola, Australia, Austria, Botswana, Canada, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Egypt, India, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Lesotho, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.
>
> "Members of the Council and the representative of Zimbabwe had an exchange of views."

United Nations S/PV.5921

Security Council

Sixty-third year

5921st meeting

Monday, 23 June 2008, 7.50 p.m.

New York

Provisional

President:	Mr. Khalilzad	(United States of America)
Members:	Belgium	Mrs. Delieux
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Du Xiacong
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Letter dated 18 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/407)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-39530 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 7.50 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

Letter dated 18 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/407)

The President: Pursuant to the decision taken at the 5919th meeting, I invite the representative of Zimbabwe to take a seat at the Council table.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Chidyausiku (Zimbabwe) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in response to a letter dated 18 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium addressed to the President of the Security Council and contained in document S/2008/407.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council.

> "The Security Council condemns the campaign of violence against the political opposition ahead of the second round of the presidential elections scheduled for 27 June, which has resulted in the killing of scores of opposition activists and other Zimbabweans and the beating and displacement of thousands of people, including many women and children.
>
> "The Security Council further condemns the actions of the Government of Zimbabwe that have denied its political opponents the right to campaign freely, and calls upon the Government of Zimbabwe to stop the violence, to cease political intimidation, to end the restrictions on the right of assembly and to release the political leaders who have been detained. The Council urges the international monitors and observers to remain in Zimbabwe while the crisis continues.
>
> "The Security Council regrets that the campaign of violence and the restrictions on the political opposition have made it impossible for a free and fair election to take place on 27 June. The Council further considers that, to be legitimate, any government of Zimbabwe must take account of the interests of all its citizens. The Council notes that the results of the 29 March 2008 elections must be respected.
>
> "The Security Council expresses its concern over the impact of the situation in Zimbabwe on the wider region. The Council welcomes the recent international efforts, including those of SADC leaders and particularly President Mbeki. The Security Council calls on the Zimbabwean authorities to cooperate fully with all efforts, including through the United Nations, aimed at finding a peaceful way forward, through dialogue between the parties, that allows a legitimate government to be formed that reflects the will of the Zimbabwean people.
>
> "The Security Council further expresses its concern at the grave humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe and condemns the suspension by the Government of Zimbabwe of the operations of humanitarian organizations, which has directly affected one and a half million people, including half a million children. The Council calls on the Government of Zimbabwe to immediately allow humanitarian organizations to resume their services.
>
> "The Security Council will continue to monitor closely the situation and requests the Secretary-General to report on ongoing regional and international efforts to resolve the crisis."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2008/23.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 7.55 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5922

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5922nd meeting

Tuesday, 24 June 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Khalilzad	(United States of America)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Grauls
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jan Eliasson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Darfur.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Eliasson to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Special Envoy of the African Union for Darfur.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Salim to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Jan Eliasson, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Darfur, and by Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Special Envoy of the African Union for Darfur.

I now give the floor to Mr. Eliasson.

Mr. Eliasson: It is an honour and a pleasure for me to address the Council today, together with my colleague and dear friend, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, the African Union (AU) Special Envoy for Darfur. As members may be aware, we also briefed the African Union Peace and Security Council jointly on 12 June in Addis Ababa. The fact that we are holding these briefings together is an indication of the ever closer cooperation between the United Nations and the AU, in the spirit of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

Darfur is a case in point. The complexity and scope of the conflict make it even more essential that we strengthen regional and international collaboration. The visit of the Security Council to several African States, including the Sudan, only three weeks ago, is an important manifestation of this growingly important dimension of international relations.

Today, I will provide an overview of the political process and the search for peace in Darfur. As members will recall, in November 2006 at the Addis Ababa high level consultations on Darfur, there was a unanimous call for a re-energized political process. The Darfur Peace Agreement of 2006 was not welcomed or accepted by a majority of Darfurians. There was also a clear need to bring the fragmented non-signatory movements together and to prepare the parties for substantive talks. By December 2006, Mr. Salim and I were appointed as Special Envoys with this task at hand.

At my first briefing to this Council, in March 2007, I reported a sense of deep fatigue and deep frustration on all sides, following four years of conflict and suffering in Darfur. I cautioned, however, that there were voices advocating status quo or a military solution. Furthermore, I expressed concern over the gravity of the humanitarian and security conditions on the ground.

Still, at that time, Mr. Salim and I felt that there was a window of opportunity, a potential for dialogue between the parties. We noted a certain readiness among them to engage in the political process. Conditions on the international and regional fronts seemed relatively favourable at that time. Momentum was being built toward the deployment of a joint AU-United Nations peacekeeping operation. During this period, we developed the roadmap for the political process, presented to this Council in June last year. The aim was to convene substantive talks by the end of last summer.

Over the past 18 months, Mr. Salim and I have urged the parties to prove their serious intentions, notably by improving the security and humanitarian situation. There was a need to build confidence and an environment conducive to peace talks. We travelled numerous times to movement-controlled areas of Darfur and to locations in the region, and urged the movements to build internal cohesion. We urged them to adopt an issue-based approach and to focus on common concerns in the areas of power-sharing, wealth-sharing and security. We strongly advised them to come to the negotiation table with unified positions.

We also met frequently in Khartoum and Juba with officials of the Government of National Unity, and urged them to show preparedness and make compromises in order to speed up the political process. We requested them to exercise political and military restraint. Also, we urged them to discuss with us how the issues of power- and wealth- sharing, as well as security could be dealt with at the talks.

During all this time, we visited over-populated refugee camps and internally displaced person camps on the ground. We sat under the trees with traditional leaders and we walked through many local, tragically empty, markets. We saw with our own eyes and felt with our own hearts why Darfur to many is considered forgotten and neglected. To all the people we saw, we had the same message and were met with the same response: it is time for a serious peace process which brings an end to the suffering, an end to political marginalization, an end to socio-economic inequality and an end to the climate of insecurity and fear prevalent today in Darfur.

Last summer, the atmosphere was positive. The Security Council had adopted resolution 1769 (2007). There had been no reported cease fire violations for four months. Most movements had indicated that they would be ready to start negotiations by the end of the summer. Despite continuing fragmentation among them, progress was made, notably in Arusha, Tanzania, in August 2007, when their leading personalities agreed on a common platform for the talks.

Based on these developments, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Chairperson Konaré decided to launch the first phase of the formal peace talks in Sirte, Libya, in October. While the tone of the exchanges between the parties was constructive, the absence of key movements and of a consolidated National Unity Government delegation made it extremely difficult to engage in substantive discussions. The conditions were just not ripe. The start of a peace process was, however, a catalyst for the movements to intensify their unification efforts, not least assisted by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in Juba. Mr. Salim and I were encouraged by the work done to restructure the tangled web of smaller groups. We saw the emergence of five main groupings: the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)-Unity, the United Resistance Front (URF), SLA-Abdul Shafie, SLA-Abdul Wahid and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)-Khalil Ibrahim.

Unfortunately, the willingness of the movements to embark on the road to peace has over time not been consistent. SLA-Abdul Wahid continues to place severe pre-conditions for participation in the talks. JEM-Khalil Ibrahim has pursued the military track and has been met with international criticism for doing so. Both these movements have also refused participation in the talks if what they call "splinter movements" were to take part. The URF and SLM-Abdul Shafie are basically positive to the process but are still working to resolve internal problems. SLA-Unity has been cooperative and declared itself ready to attend talks at any time.

In the beginning of last fall, JEM split and SPLM suspended its work in the Government. Since then, the environment has continued to deteriorate. The incursions and stand-off between Chad and Sudan have underscored the urgent need for good neighbourly relations between them. The attack on Omdurman proved that there are those who still believe in a military solution. The destruction in Abyei showed the lingering North-South tensions in Sudan and the consequences of unimplemented agreements. Continued clashes in Darfur between the movements and the Sudan Armed Forces and among tribal militias make it clear that this intractable conflict is still unfolding.

To this should be added continued violence and dire humanitarian conditions on the ground. Humanitarian access is constrained by fighting between the movements and between them and the Government's armed forces. Access and security have been further curtailed by attacks on humanitarian workers and assets, by banditry, by looting and even by abductions and murders. This has taken a heavy toll on humanitarian operations, not least on the delivery of food which the World Food Programme (WFP) has had to substantially diminish. High food prices globally and the impending rainy season give further reasons for alarm.

The security situation in Darfur should now be our primary concern. In accordance with our framework for the way forward, presented this spring, Mr. Salim and I have, for a few months now, placed strong emphasis on reducing the level of violence. As a part of these efforts, we had extensive contacts with the parties on convening informal security consultations between the movements and the Government of Sudan in Switzerland earlier this month.

In the end, JEM and SLM-Abdul Wahid chose not to agree to meet for such consultations at this time. For that and other reasons, we decided to postpone. Meanwhile, we continue to discuss security with the parties on a bilateral basis.

Against this background, it is with much regret that I report today that we are in a troubled state of affairs in the political process. Since the Sirte talks, the parties have not been willing to come together for substantive talks. Mr. Salim and I have not sensed a prevailing willingness on the part of the parties to engage in confidence-building measures so as to improve prospects for negotiations. Trust among them has not been established and is in some cases completely absent.

Fragmentation within the movements continues to affect their cohesion and preparedness for talks. Instead of coming together around issues that would facilitate the process and improve the lives of generations of Darfurians, some of the movements have been engaged in power struggles and in-fighting. They have been preoccupied with formulating preconditions for talks and using rhetoric often distant from reality. The original movements, SLA-Abdul Wahid and JEM-Khalil Ibrahim, claim to be more legitimate than the other groups. Thus, they should, in my view, accept responsibility, exercise leadership and promote cooperation with the other movements.

At the same time, we must recognize that the movements have great and genuine lack of trust in the Government of Sudan. They seriously doubt that there will be a fair implementation of a peace accord. They look at the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and Darfur Peace Agreement as examples of why not to come to the negotiation table. Continued attacks against civilians and resettlement on land owned by people now languishing in the camps do not foster an atmosphere of confidence. Let us also remember that it is first and foremost the Government of Sudan that has the resources and responsibility to ensure protection, prosperity and a life of dignity for all the people of Darfur and Sudan.

Mr. Salim and I have thus called several times upon the Government to exercise maximum restraint and be forthcoming on key issues of the conflict in order concretely to demonstrate its commitment to a political solution. Further, for trust to be established, for a credible political process to be made possible and for reconciliation to occur, respect for human rights and the rule of law is crucial.

I often ask myself why the conflict in Darfur is so difficult to resolve. I have come to the conclusion that it is because it requires simultaneous harmony at four levels: the international community; the regional partners; the Government of National Unity of Sudan; and, finally, the movements in Darfur. Such harmony has, over time and in varying degrees, been conspicuously absent.

It is now crucial that influential players from the international community explore and analyse their comparative advantages vis-à-vis the parties and the region. To make progress, all must accept responsibility. A much more efficient division of labour is required in dealing with this crisis. There is an urgent need for outside actors — international organizations, Member States and especially members of this Council — to jointly exert influence, as well as use bilateral leverage on the parties to stop further hostilities and take steps towards peace. A well-prepared high-level international meeting could play a positive catalyst role in that respect.

To succeed, we must also look at Darfur through the broader lens of Sudan as a whole, as well as of the region. In so doing, we should keep the following considerations in mind.

First, the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement obviously has far-reaching implications for Darfur. This is true in terms of confidence-building, but also for future power-sharing arrangements in Darfur and Sudan.

Secondly, there will be no peace in Darfur without a normalization of relations between Sudan and Chad. Concerted efforts are required to assist and influence both countries to re-establish security and to live up to existing agreements, the most recent of which is the Dakar Accord.

Thirdly, peace will require political will and a willingness from the parties to compromise. This also requires that key international and regional actors come up with more credible diplomatic, financial and socio-economic incentives and disincentives, including recovery programmes in places where conditions are stable.

Fourthly, there must be a more rapid and effective deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). The implementation of resolution 1769 (2007) is critical for the credibility of the international community and for this Council and for the security and well-being of the people of Darfur. The international community has demonstrated solidarity with Darfur through the brave men and women offered to UNAMID from many nations. At the same time, I must say that hand-picking eligible nationalities for a peacekeeping operation is hardly consistent with the spirit of the United Nations Charter, and it certainly complicates the peace process.

Fifthly, the quest for peace will always be obstructed when there is an abundance of arms. More effective efforts must be made to end the arms flow to Darfur, in accordance with the United Nations embargo.

Finally, the people of Darfur must be much more actively engaged in the process. We should recall resolution 1325 (2000) when we see that women and children suffer the most. Ordinary citizens and internally displaced persons have carried a heavy burden and have already paid a huge price. Any future agreement will be stillborn unless civil society, traditional leaders and representatives from the displaced communities know that their voices are heard. Their interests — and not only those who have taken up arms — must be respected. In this regard, Mr. Salim and I welcome the recent commitment by the Government to a stronger engagement with civil society in Darfur.

I would like to conclude with a few personal reflections. I often quote the old Swedish saying that you can bring a horse to the waterhole, but you cannot force a horse to drink. In the case of Darfur, there is now reason to seriously question whether the parties are ready to sit down at the negotiation table and make the compromises necessary for peace. Mr. Salim and I have tried our best to assist them. The appointment of a full-time joint United Nations-African Union chief mediator to continue in this quest is now imminent. The name is to be announced as soon as the parties have been informed. Mr. Salim and I will remain available for advice and engagement as need be.

However, the appointment of a chief mediator will, in itself, of course, not bring peace to Darfur. As mentioned, others must contribute by providing more enticing incentives and more credible disincentives to the parties. That may require a shift in mindset in how the main protagonists and we all view the crisis. There has been a tendency to compartmentalize the conflict in Darfur, without taking sufficient account of the national and regional dimensions.

The outside world, as much as the parties, has a responsibility to bring an end to this tragedy. It risks tearing apart a great nation of Africa, seriously destabilizing the region and endangering international peace and security. For over five years, millions of people have suffered enormously. This simply cannot go on. A new generation in Sudan may be doomed to a life in conflict, a life in despair and a life in poverty. The international community should have learned enough lessons from other conflicts in which populations were left to stagnate and radicalize in camps.

Therefore, we must now urgently mobilize all available political energy inside and outside Sudan to, first of all, stop escalation and reach a cessation of hostilities and, secondly, lay a foundation for serious peace talks for Darfur. But, at the end of the day, we will not make progress unless the Sudanese themselves show seriousness, political will and a focused commitment to peace. It is for them to accept responsibility and finally settle the outstanding issues that for so long have plagued the people of Darfur and the people of Sudan.

The President: I thank Mr. Eliasson for his briefing. I now give the floor to Mr. Salim.

Mr. Salim: I am honoured to have this opportunity to address the Security Council. I am particularly pleased, Sir, to do so under your presidency. I am aware of the significant efforts made by your country in the search for an end to the conflict in Darfur and the achievement of a just and durable settlement. I am particularly conscious of the active support given to both my colleague and friend Jan Eliasson and me by the United States and other international partners in the discharge of our mandate as Special Envoys of the United Nations and the African Union on Darfur.

I am not a stranger to the Security Council as far as the issue of Darfur is concerned. During the Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on Darfur held in Abuja in 2005 and 2006, during which I was the African Union Special Envoy and Chief Mediator and which culminated in the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement, I had occasions to brief the Council. This time, however, I do so jointly with Special Envoy Eliasson, manifesting our teamwork and eloquently displaying in practical terms the growing cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in our collective quest for peace and security and, more specifically, in our collective determination to contribute to ending the tragic conflict in Darfur. As Mr. Eliasson rightly observed, 12 days ago both of us had the opportunity to brief the African Union Peace and Security Council in Addis Ababa.

In his presentation today, Special Envoy Eliasson has given a detailed and elaborate account of our joint activities. Those include intensive consultations, road maps, work plans, programmes and strategies that the Special Envoys, assisted by the Joint Mediation Support Team, put in place, with the full support of regional and international players, aimed at bringing the parties in conflict to the negotiation table. I fully share what he has said.

Sixteen months ago, the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission entrusted us with a specific mandate, namely, to re-energize the political process. In other words, we were to create propitious conditions for the parties in conflict — that is to say, the Government of the Sudan and the armed movements — to engage in a more inclusive political dialogue leading to a more acceptable, and therefore more durable, political settlement of the Darfur problem. During this period, we travelled many times to Sudan. In particular, we visited Khartoum, Darfur and Juba.

In Darfur we visited extensively several different areas to meet with the leaders and commanders of the armed movements. During those visits we consulted extensively with stakeholders, including signatories and non-signatories to the Darfur Peace Agreement, traditional leaders, leaders of political parties, representatives of internally displaced persons, civil society organizations, women's and youth groups and intellectuals. One of the shortcomings of the Abuja Peace Talks was to confine the entire process to the Government and the armed movements. This time, we were determined to rectify that by ensuring that the broadest range of stakeholders were involved, or at the very least consulted.

In Khartoum, during our consultations with Government leaders and officials at various levels, while welcoming the Government's preparedness to enter into negotiations, we urged them to take concrete measures to allay the concerns and fears of the movements, which have a very deep distrust of the Government. We underscored the fact that the Government has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of security, and consequently should take deliberate and sustained steps aimed at de-escalating violence, including exercising restraint and refraining from aerial bombardments, which invariably have terrible consequences on innocent civilians. We also urged the Government to be more proactive and flexible on the fundamental issues that constitute the current divide between them and the movements in respect of the future dispensation of Darfur.

In Juba, we also met on several occasions with top leaders and officials. We supported and encouraged their efforts aimed at promoting the unity of the movements. We did so because, first, we believe that, as part of the Government of National Unity, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) can, and should, play an important and constructive role in the achievement of a just and lasting settlement of the Darfur crisis. Secondly, we believe that the SPLM's own experience and its historic relations with some of the movements in Darfur would be helpful in encouraging them towards the process of negotiations.

We spent a considerable part of our time, energy and the limited resources at the disposal of the joint mediation encouraging and supporting efforts by the movements aimed at bringing about unity, or at the very least the attainment of common positions. We did so in the firm belief that such unity would contribute immensely to the peace process and that, conversely, continued fragmentation was inimical to peace and stability in Darfur. In our efforts and initiatives we interacted and consulted closely with regional partners. We also had the support of international partners.

The Arusha consultations in August 2007 provided a ray of hope. Regrettably, however, that optimism was shattered with the division that occurred within the leadership of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) soon thereafter. Subsequent to the commencement of the Sirte process in October last year, and drawing from the lessons of Sirte, which, inter alia, necessitated the postponement of the talks due to the absence of some of the major players, efforts were intensified aimed at forging some degree of unity and cohesion. The emergence of five groups — instead of having to deal with about two dozen factions or so — is to be welcomed. Of course, ideally we would have liked to have the situation that prevailed at the beginning of the Abuja Talks, namely, only the Sudan Liberation Movement and the Justice and Equality Movement. Regrettably, however, for the present that remains a mere ideal. Furthermore, it is important to recall that the process of fragmentation within the movements started in earnest while the Abuja Talks were still taking place.

The reality on the ground is therefore that there is still division among the movements, and in some instances within them. Another sad reality is that some of the movements are not prepared, or are unwilling, not only to enter into substantive negotiations but are even against taking part in any formal or informal talks. Some insist on preconditions that are clearly unacceptable, even though some of their legitimate demands as such should form a basis for negotiations. Others claim an exclusive monopoly on representation and are dismissive of all other movements. Still others seem to vigorously pursue a military option, as manifested by JEM's unfortunate attack on Omdurman, which has drawn universal international condemnation.

To compound the situation, the process of fragmentation has not been completely halted. In short, the political process has reached an impasse and, as it was stressed in a meeting we held with regional and international partners earlier this month in Geneva, there is a need to rethink the strategy on the way forward. As the Security Council reflects on this rather gloomy picture and considers the way forward, I believe it is important to take into consideration the following factors, among others.

The number one concern of Darfurians — as eloquently expressed to us whenever we met with them, in towns or villages, whether in Government areas or in rebel strongholds — is the question of security. There is fighting involving the Sudanese armed forces and some of the movements. There is fighting between some movements themselves. There is the terror that continues to be unleashed by the Janjaweed. And there is the sheer banditry and criminality perpetrated by some armed groups. It is indeed no exaggeration to assert that Darfurians in general have been eagerly waiting the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), and have great expectations that its full deployment will make a great difference in their daily lives. Such a deployment will certainly go a long way in helping to create a favourable climate for the launching of the peace process.

It is therefore all the more regrettable that such a deployment has been agonizingly slow in the face of numerous difficulties, some due to the position of the Government of the Sudan on such matters as the composition of the force and others due to the failure of the international community to act decisively. We all recognize that what is needed in Darfur is a robust, well-equipped force with a reasonable mobile capacity. In this connection, I believe that it is a sad commentary that notwithstanding the existence of thousands of helicopters it has not yet been possible to obtain two dozen or so helicopters for UNAMID. And yet the international community at large has repeatedly called for the rapid deployment of a robust UNAMID.

Given these circumstances, it is, in our opinion, important to be vigilant so that the euphoria of expectation among Darfurians does not yield to despondency. At the same time it is evident that UNAMID per se, even when fully deployed with the necessary equipment and logistical backup, will not translate into peace and stability in Darfur. The hybrid force will need the cooperation of all the parties in order to effectively discharge its responsibilities. Above all, it will need a peace to keep; hence the crucial importance of the political process.

The situation of insecurity in Darfur is made worse by the tense and deteriorating relations between Chad and the Sudan. In the interests of the peoples of both Chad and the Sudan, it is crucial that this situation be defused. The various accords reached between the two countries, including the latest one agreed upon in Dakar, cry out for implementation. Clearly, without the reduction of tension between these two neighbours and the normalization of relations, it is inconceivable that there can be a lasting solution to the conflict in Darfur.

Another issue of grave concern which requires urgent attention and action is the flow of arms into Darfur despite the existence of an arms embargo. The Security Council should look into this and should close whatever loopholes exist.

On 16 November 2006 a high-level meeting involving a number of States and institutions, including the representatives of the Government of the Sudan and the representatives of the permanent members of the Security Council, was held at the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Abba. That meeting was jointly chaired by the then Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the then African Union Commission Chairperson, President Alpha Oumar Konare. It decided on a number of key issues including re-energizing the political process and the creation of an African Union-United Nations hybrid force. In Geneva, in June, a proposal was made and generally accepted, subject to appropriate preparations, recommending the holding of a high-level meeting to be convened by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping to chart the way forward. It is recommended that the participants at the meeting should include the Foreign Ministers of the permanent members of the Security Council, representatives of the Government of the Sudan and regional and international partners. Given the current situation in Darfur, with its repercussions in the whole of the Sudan and in the region, this proposal, in our opinion, merits serious follow-up so that it can be realized as soon as possible. As a new approach is required in dealing with this crisis, such a meeting would provide a unique opportunity for reflection, consideration and possible action.

Given the enormity of the challenges that lie ahead, the need to have someone following events on daily basis and engaging the parties on a more regular basis is self-evident. That is why Jan Eliasson and I very much look forward to the appointment of a common AU-United Nations chief mediator, who will be based in Khartoum. He will need the active support of the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council. He will certainly have the full support of the two Special Envoys and the Joint Mediation Support Team. Even more crucially, however, he will need the support of the Government of the Sudan and the movements. In the meantime, it is important to underscore the need for both the United Nations Security Council and AU Peace and Security Council to be actively engaged in the process and to send the right signals and strong messages to the parties. They should encourage those who support the peace process and effectively discourage all those who constitute an obstacle to peace.

It is now five years since the armed conflict erupted in Darfur. These have been five very difficult years for the people of Darfur, who have seen tens of thousands of their compatriots, including their wives and husbands, their mothers and fathers, their children and grandchildren, killed or maimed and millions more displaced in camps for internally displaced persons or as refugees. The challenge before the United Nations and the African Union is how to put an end to this catastrophic conflict, contribute to lasting peace and thereby enable the Darfurians to live in dignity, free of constant threats to their lives. Peace, security and stability in Darfur are crucial not only for the people of that western region of the Sudan but for the Sudan as a whole, inasmuch as the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is vital for the entire country.

Equally challenging is the task of reducing tension in the region and promoting normal relations. The international community, and more particularly those countries and institutions with comparative advantages, should use their influence with the Sudan and the region to assist in the efforts to end the conflict and promote peace, security and development. But ultimately, the responsibility is that of the Sudanese people themselves.

The President: I thank Mr. Salim for his briefing.

I shall now call on Council members wishing to make statements.

Mr. Ettalhi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to welcome Mr. Jan Eliasson and Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim to the Council and to thank them for their briefings. We are highly appreciative of their endeavours in discharging their complex and difficult — but noble and lofty — mandates.

It is regrettable that the security situation in Darfur has deteriorated during the period under consideration, as attested to by this morning's briefings, by the reports of the Secretary-General and by what internally displaced persons (IDPs) and humanitarian workers told the Security Council mission during its visit to Darfur.

The 10 May action by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), targeting the capital, and the ongoing violence among tribal groups, rebel movements and the Government underscore the need to accelerate the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and to ensure that it has the capacity necessary to protect civilians, in particular those in IDP camps, and humanitarian workers. The number of IDPs grows by the day, which regrettably means an increased number of people in need of assistance and protection.

But there has been a delay, if not a disruption, in the deployment of UNAMID, due in large part to the mission's considerable shortfall in equipment. For example, as the report indicates, the deployment of the first Egyptian battalion has been delayed owing to the absence of necessary equipment. The same is true for the Ethiopian battalion. Be they Egyptian or Ethiopian, these troops are prepared to be deployed in Darfur. Yet the camps were not ready to receive them, thereby impeding their arrival. In addition, the Nepalese and Thai troops were also late to arrive.

We listened to the Sudanese officials whom we met during our visit expressing their unqualified cooperation in the deployment of the hybrid force. Because the deployment of the hybrid force is clearly in the interest of the Sudanese Government and, more broadly, in the interest of stability and peace, we expect that the Sudanese Government, together with the Mission, will constitute a joint team to overcome all the problems standing in the way of the deployment. The Sudanese officials clearly expressed their willingness to operate the airports in the Darfur region on a continuous 24-hour basis, although that required overcoming technical deficiencies and completing the unfinished airport infrastructure to enable them to receive the aircraft deployed for the mission. In this regard, paragraph 29 of the report contained in document S/2006/400 deserves special attention. It reads as follows:

> "Despite ongoing efforts, critical mission capabilities are still lacking, namely, 18 medium utility helicopters, six attack helicopters, one aerial reconnaissance unit, one medium transport unit, one heavy transport unit and one multi-role logistics unit."

Once again, the mission is regrettably still facing deficiencies that hamper its deployment.

All of us know that success in deploying the hybrid Mission depends on providing for its requirements so that it can discharge its tasks. That is a sine qua non, a precondition to ameliorate the humanitarian and security conditions in Darfur and to improve the chances for success of the political process.

Participants at the Geneva meeting on 5 June under the chairmanship of the two mediators expressed their disappointment over the late deployment of the force as well as the adverse consequences resulting therefrom on the political process. The two mediators emphasized this fact in the Council this morning as well.

It is regrettable that, despite the efforts deployed, particularly by the two Envoys, Mr. Jan Eliasson and Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, the political process has not achieved even a modicum of progress; rather, it has deteriorated. Some rebel movements refuse to join the political process. Further, they insist on continuing the violence, despite the fact that the Sudanese Government expressed its readiness to engage in dialogue and hastened to declare a unilateral ceasefire, as mentioned at the launching of the Sirte negotiations.

We believe that greater attention must be directed by this Council to the political process, in addition to supporting the efforts made by the two Envoys, providing propitious circumstances for the launching of the peace process. In our estimation, that requires the following steps. First, there must be an attempt to achieve Sudanese-Chadian reconciliation through the support of the efforts of the contact group that was formed as a result of the Dakar Agreement. On that score, I agree with Mr. Salim about the impossibility of achieving peace in Darfur if there is no Sudanese-Chadian reconciliation.

Secondly, persons and groups that refuse to accede to the peace process or seek to achieve a ceasefire with the current measures should be targeted. The Council has hesitated a great deal on this point. Some movements have refused even to engage in mere participation in designated security consultations despite the efforts of the two international mediators and the specific appeals made to them. It would also be useful for the peace process to offer incentives to those who are taking positive stands.

Thirdly, greater attention to and support for civil society and the traditional leadership are also important. Unfortunately, we have to acknowledge that traditional tribal leaders have tremendous influence, greatly exceeding that of the political leadership. We believe that civil society and the traditional leadership are more eager to achieve peace, stability and security. That is the reality in tribal societies.

Fourthly, we are in full agreement with the observations made by the participants in Geneva, namely that the continued flow of arms to Darfur unfortunately persists. It is therefore important to redress this matter urgently and effectively.

In conclusion, I agree with Mr. Eliasson's statement on the need to agree to the six points he raised. That will undoubtedly have a considerable effect on advancing the peace process.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): I would like to add my very warm thanks to Jan Eliasson and Salim Salim for their efforts over the past 18 months. Their statements today had something of the flavour of a valedictory report, and we very much welcome the intention of the Secretary-General to appoint a joint chief mediator for the United Nations and the African Union in the days ahead; he briefed the Council on this point yesterday. We welcome this move and we fully understand that the role of the two Special Envoys will change and retreat a little bit. After the 18 months of labouring in the Darfur vineyard, eating the sour grapes and drinking the undrinkable wine, that decision is fully understandable.

The Security Council visit, as my good friend Ambassador Ettalhi has said, was quite revealing for us all in terms of the real difficulties on the ground in Darfur, in Khartoum and also in Chad. We came to many of the same gloomy conclusions that the two Special Envoys have reported to the Council today. We briefed the Council on our findings, but I think it is very striking that the six factors that Mr. Jan Eliasson have identified are very similar to some of the factors that we focused on as well.

I would like to take those six considerations in turn, keeping in mind that they overlap extensively with what Mr. Salim said in his own report.

First of all, I think it is quite right to put the centrality of the peace agreement first, even in discussion on Darfur. It was very clear to us all in Sudan that the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is the cornerstone of peace in the Sudan. If the CPA founders, then there is no hope in the short term or the medium term for progress elsewhere. We have to do everything we can to keep the CPA on track, and the United Nations can do more in that respect. The events in Abyei just a few weeks ago showed that the role of the United Nations presence, the United Nations force on the ground, could be more active and could be more involved in preventing the sorts of clashes which led to the forced displacement of up to 60,000 people and the razing to the ground of one of the main towns of southern Sudan.

Secondly, it was clear in visiting both Sudan and Chad on consecutive days that the situations on either side of the border are intimately linked. The Council has vehemently condemned the attacks by the Justice and Equality Movement into the suburbs of Khartoum. It has also condemned the attacks by Chad rebels towards N'Djamena. The fact is that rebels on each side are backed by the other's Government. We have to be very clear that the international presence on the ground cannot be used as a shield behind which Governments in Khartoum and N'Djamena make the Council's goals in Khartoum more difficult to achieve. I believe the focus that the two Special Envoys have placed today on the centrality of establishing stable and good neighbourly relations between the Sudan and Chad is absolutely fundamental, because without that we are not going to make progress in Darfur.

Thirdly, I was struck by what Mr. Eliasson said about incentives and disincentives as being clearly insufficient. This does not mean that we simply reach for more sanctions, but we do have to consider whether sanctions are not part of the mix against those who are obstructing the peace process. We must also consider what incentives we can offer to both parties to engage. At the moment, they are not sufficient.

Fourthly, Mr. Eliasson focused on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). The Secretary-General has spoken of a target of 80 per cent deployment by the year's end. We all know that UNAMID has been bedevilled in its first year by the gap between the commitments the parties have made and the reality. There is a gap in the provision by the international community of key units, which we need to continue to address. There is a gap on the United Nations side in building up the capacity, as my Libyan colleague identified, to receive new units on the ground. Here, the United Nations has not done as much as it could. There is a gap on the Sudanese side where there is much talk about cooperation, but, as we saw on the ground, the reality is continued low-level difficulties and, at times, obstruction. UNAMID is not going to be the single way to solve this problem in Darfur, but is a crucial element which we need to get right.

Fifthly, Mr. Eliasson focused on the arms embargo. It is very striking when one is in Darfur that any local thug with some money can buy a pick-up truck, some rocket-propelled grenades and kalashnikov rifles and turn himself into a militia. We need to address this free availability of weapons in Darfur if we are to solve this problem. That means that all members of this Council have to do more to address the seriousness of the arms embargo that we have placed on Darfur and to make sure that we do not idly sell weapons which just happen to find their way there. We are responsible for ensuring that weapons do not reach Darfur. We may need to look at an extension of the scope of the arms embargo if we are to address this problem. That is one thing that needs to be on the table.

Sixthly, Mr. Eliasson focused on the people of Darfur. I believe the efforts to bring together civil society, community groups, traditional leaders and tribal elders in Darfur are crucial. Too often the negotiations on Darfur are seen as negotiations between militias, whereas it is actually the people who have to live together — they have lived together there for centuries and they need to continue to live together, albeit in stressful circumstances. If we can generate an understanding from the bottom up, this will be a crucial part of our efforts. The United Kingdom stands ready to play a role to bring the parties together if and when that would make a helpful contribution.

Lastly, one factor that Mr. Eliasson did not mention is the question of impunity. After we were in Darfur, the Security Council went to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which knows about the problem of impunity. President Kabila said that one cannot put justice aside and hope for a durable peace. That applies as much in Darfur as it does in the Congo and elsewhere in Africa.

So it is with these thoughts that I wanted to imply that the Council has some very serious and difficult business ahead on Sudan. It will remain the most demanding topic on our agenda. I would say, once again, how grateful we are for the efforts of Mr. Salim and Mr. Eliasson over the last 18 months in trying to move this dossier forward, and we are glad that they remain available and on-call should we need their services again in the future.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting. Let me also welcome the Special Envoys, Mr. Jan Eliasson, whom I choose to remember in his capacity as President of the General Assembly, and, of course, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, who will forever be associated with the Organization of African Unity, now known as the African Union (AU).

I must say at the outset that, having been to Darfur, I admire the fact that these two Special Envoys were able to go there over and over again to try to assist the people of Darfur. In fact, I would like to say that those who always wonder what is wrong in Darfur and what can be done probably should spend time studying the two statements delivered to us today. Although we left Darfur a while ago, I am still concerned that the people in Darfur are crying for Darfur. I sometimes wonder whether we can address their cries. We all say that the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) should be at full strength, but we should also be aware that, even if UNAMID was deployed at full capacity, it cannot be a substitute for dialogue and political negotiations. Without the political process, one would need 200,000 soldiers and perhaps 100 helicopters in the air at all times. Certainly, we should call for helicopters, which are so sorely needed in Darfur; but without the political process, one would need to keep those helicopters in the air for 24 hours a day to give any kind of assurance to the people of Darfur, who are exposed, not only to the elements of nature, but to the violence that can come from every imaginable direction and from every imaginable source. We in South Africa remain very committed to trying to find a durable solution to the situation in Darfur, one of whose very important pillars is the political process. We pay tribute to what Mr. Eliasson and Mr. Salim have done in trying to re-energize the peace process.

I was very struck by my visit to Sudan. Before I went there, I thought there were basically two movements, one called the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and one called the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), and those were really the two movements, with, of course, splinter factions from those two. But among everyone that I talked to in Sudan, no one ever believed that JEM was really serious about Darfur. First Vice-President Salva Kiir said that JEM has always had the goal of regime change. They are more worried about changing the Government in Khartoum.

It is not been surprising that JEM, which was of course roundly condemned by all of us for their attack on Omdurman, is viewed by all those who know about them as not having their hearts in Darfur. Darfur is a good halfway station for them, because Darfur comes with publicity and the world's attention.

That raises the question that I would like to ask both Special Envoys, through you, Mr. President. The Envoys were very diplomatic, saying that we should put pressure on them. But what about taking serious measures against these people? What about putting pressure on them? Of course, it is easy to put pressure on the Government, because they are there, but these guys are operating out of the back of their pickup trucks. What about finding ways to also put pressure on them? Some of them live in Europe, so we can get to them if we want to. I am not saying we should not put pressure on the Government. But I am trying to ask: what is the way in which we could also apply pressure to these people?

Based on the statements we have just heard, I want to say a small prayer for the chief mediator who will be appointed, because expecting the mediator that the Secretary-General will appoint to go into this situation and to do better than these very seasoned international civil servants in front of us is asking too much. We must provide tools that the international community is going to use to assist the mediator in doing his work. Otherwise, the only difference between this person who will be appointed and Mr. Salim and Mr. Eliasson will be that he or she will be based in Khartoum and will be there all the time. But if we are going to deal with some of these people, who are so well-described here, maybe we need to say something about how that should happen.

At the same time, with regard to the political process — and I realize that this is not the meeting for that, but I have said it before and I will say it again — I was very surprised at how inadequately resourced the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) is. I told the story about going into a camp in Darfur and listening to the people saying "we need protection" and then going to UNAMID and realizing that we do not have the resources to assist them at this stage. That is why we hope the deployment can speed up as soon as possible.

I am tempted to comment on Mr. Eliasson's four-part harmony, coming from Africa, where we sing without instruments. To really have a good four-part harmony, you must all sing from the same sheet music or remember the same song. Right now, the four that he mentioned that make up that four-part harmony do not even have the same sheet music among themselves so how can they sing together in four-part harmony?

I agree on the arms embargo and the proliferation of arms in Darfur, but that will also only be addressed if we have all the pieces in place, if we have UNAMID at full strength and if we have a political process under way. That may do it, but right now, when the people of Darfur ask us the difficult question "Can you help us?", at this moment we should be humble enough to say that we are not yet well enough equipped to help them. We truly want to, but we just are not there yet.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I will be very brief. China thanks Mr. Eliasson and Mr. Salim for their briefings. China has taken note of the fact that the two Special Envoys recently presided over informal consultations on the political process in Darfur in order to pool our collective wisdom to push ahead the political process in the region. China appreciates the tireless efforts made by the two Special Envoys and their teams to resolve the Darfur issue.

The current situation in Darfur leaves no room for optimism, and efforts in all areas face challenges. The international community should continue to follow the dual-track strategy and make full use of the tripartite mechanism, with a focus on pushing the political process forward and ensuring the deployment of peacekeepers.

As pointed out in the Secretary-General's reports, the key to restarting the political process in Darfur lies in the parties' political will to seek a negotiated settlement of their differences. China supports the appointment of a chief mediator to integrate international resources, optimize regional strategies and present a united front to the parties, in particular by sending a clear message to the rebel groups in question and urging them to join the political process at the earliest possible date.

China is deeply concerned over the lack of resources for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), because substantial funding is available. We hope that the Secretariat will continue to enhance its coordination with the troop-contributing countries and to seek, from the international community, the civil aviation, transportation and engineering contingents that are so badly needed. China welcomes the assistance to the troop-contributing countries provided by Member States in a position to do so through various means, including in the areas of equipment and training, so as to help the Secretariat in accelerating the deployment of the peacekeeping forces.

The recent security situation in Darfur has severely interfered with the humanitarian relief efforts there. China urges the parties concerned to refrain from attacking international relief organizations and their workers, and to facilitate their work.

With the onset of the rainy season, humanitarian problems resulting from food shortages, blocked roads and rampant banditry will become ever more serious. We hope that this will be given adequate attention by the United Nations.

As always, China will support the United Nations and the African Union in their efforts to resolve the Darfur issue.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank the Special Envoys of the Secretary-General and the African Union for their briefings. I commend them for their commitment and tenacity.

The political process that Mr. Jan Eliasson and Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim are trying to bring about is crucial to peace in Darfur. Like all of our colleagues, we call on all the parties to end the violence and engage unconditionally in the political process. That of course applies, first of all, to the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), whose attack in Khartoum in May France and the European Union have condemned. It also applies to the ruling party, which, as the mediators have said here, has carried out indiscriminate attacks against villages in recent months, including aerial bombardments and the use of Janjaweed militias, in spite of the repeated appeals of the Security Council and in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. Lastly, that also goes for all the other movements in Darfur. For its part, the French Government is continuing its efforts to convince Mr. Abdul Wahid al-Nur to rejoin the peace process. It is true that the task has become more difficult while we await a genuine meeting.

My delegation agrees with the choice of the co-mediators to organize consultations with the movements on security issues. We regret that the holding of those consultations has had to be postponed due to the lack of sufficient participation at this stage. However, we must break out of the vicious circle into which the political process risks becoming trapped. While that process is coming together, as Mr. Eliasson has said, it is also essential to pursue negotiations with civil society in order to listen to their expectations and not allow those who have taken up arms to be the sole representatives of all Darfurians. Finally, my delegation welcomes the upcoming appointment by the United Nations and the African Union of a joint chief mediator to strengthen the mediation team. The political process is not a separate process detached from other aspects of the crisis. To the contrary, we cannot hope to move the political process forward unless we make progress on the other issues.

The effective deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID) continues to be essential and urgent. That United Nations operation has the task of protecting the population and actively monitoring the ceasefire. So long as the operation does not have the sufficient capacity to meet its mandate, the civilian population will continue to live in fear, humanitarian workers will risk their lives on a daily basis and the parties will continue to view each other with suspicion. It is therefore urgent that we strengthen UNAMID. That means that we must have the full cooperation of the Sudanese authorities, which is still lacking. In the meantime, we believe that in no way can UNAMID hesitate to assume its responsibilities, in particular by organizing more secure convoys and by ensuring the safety of road corridors. During the Council's mission, we saw that that task was not impossible.

Combating impunity also continues to be an essential task. How can we persuade the population of Darfur to adhere to their genuine desire to make peace when a person wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity continues to serve in the Government and is in charge of humanitarian affairs? The people of Darfur have the right to justice. Those responsible for the gross violations committed in Darfur must be held accountable. The response of the President of the Sudan to the Security Council mission's request in that regard has been inadequate. In that connection, I should like to reiterate that the European Union has stated its readiness to consider additional measures against those who continue to refuse to cooperate with the International Criminal Court.

As the mediators have said, the proper implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is also an essential element in bringing peace back to Darfur. The Government of National Unity, which was established by virtue of the Agreement, has the primary responsibility to bring about peace in the entire country, and therefore in Darfur as well.

My delegation is pleased to note that the recent crisis in Abyei has been overcome and that the United Nations was able to learn valuable lessons as a consequence. We hope that the north-south process will be strengthened as a result, thereby contributing to establishing the environment for a national agreement on Darfur. At stake is the unity and prosperity of all of the Sudan, to which we are especially committed.

Lastly, regional tensions must be calmed. We welcome the commitment of regional partners, especially that of Libya and the Congo, to follow up the Dakar Accord. It is in the interest of both the Sudan and Chad to re-establish cooperative and good-neighbourly relations. As the Security Council's mission declared, people in both Khartoum and N'Djamena must distance themselves from the armed rebel groups. That is the only way to establish trust between the parties.

My delegation believes it crucial to make progress in all those areas in order that the efforts to relaunch the Darfur peace process can produce results. We therefore once again reiterate our confidence in the Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank the two Special Envoys, Mr. Jan Eliasson and Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, for their respective statements, which have given us an overview of the current situation in Darfur, especially as regards the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). I would also like to congratulate them and to assure them of our full support in the great efforts they are making to ensure that UNAMID is at last effective and to restore peace to Darfur.

The recent mission of the Security Council to Sudan allowed us to see the reality on the ground at first-hand, to fully assess the scope of the challenges facing UNAMID and, above all, to hear the expectations of the civilian population as regards security and stability. What we saw there, especially in camps for refugees and displaced persons, was fully in line with the statements we have just heard. The continuation of violence serves to remind us of the urgency of finding a way out of the crisis. We have taken note of the assurances given by the Sudanese Government. We reiterate our strong condemnation of all acts of violence, regardless of who the perpetrators are.

The confrontation between the Sudanese Government and various illegal armed groups, which include inter-tribal and inter-factional groups, is exacerbating the humanitarian and security situation in Darfur, thereby endangering the political dialogue currently under way. That situation of insecurity — which also affects humanitarian workers and UNAMID personnel, who are also victims — serves to limit access in providing humanitarian assistance to the vulnerable civilian population.

Burkina Faso believes that the lack of genuine political will by the parties to engage in substantive negotiations, in particular on the part of various illegal armed groups, is the major obstacle to resolving the crisis. The Security Council must therefore call upon all parties to agree to the principle of peace. In that regard, we welcome the decision of the Secretary-General to soon appoint a joint chief mediator to begin negotiations as quickly as possible.

With regard to the deployment of UNAMID, as several speakers before me have emphasized, along with senior UNAMID officials, we have taken into account the difficulties and constraints facing the deployment of the Operation.

There is a lack of infrastructure for the operation, a lack of engineering capacity, difficulties in transporting equipment, lack of security, et cetera. Solutions to these problems must be found as soon as possible, lest UNAMID be endangered.

We are gratified by the Sudanese Government's willingness to work for the effective deployment of UNAMID, and we take note of its hope that some of the mission's concerns can be resolved in collaboration with the competent Sudanese authorities. It is a fact that UNAMID needs vigorous, concrete and substantial support if it is to be fully operational in the near future. The Security Council has a central role to play in that regard.

We thank the countries that are providing support to the mission and at the same time appeal to all partners to contribute to eliminating the obstacles that continue to hamper the deployment of the force. We are confident that the commitment of all States Members of the United Nations, and of Security Council members in particular, will make it possible to resolve these logistical issues.

As many have noted, the search for a lasting solution to the Darfur crisis hinges on a regional approach, specifically the normalization of diplomatic relations between Chad and the Sudan. Here, we urge those two countries to begin constructive political dialogue and to resume the meetings of the contact group supporting the implementation of the Dakar Agreement, without forgetting, of course, the African Union mediation. We believe that on that basis it will be possible to build lasting peace and stability in Darfur and throughout the subregion.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): I warmly welcome Special Envoys Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim back to New York, and I thank them for the very lucid briefings, as well as for their tireless efforts to achieve peace in Darfur. In fact, what we have seen today is a very disturbing and gloomy picture — indeed, the word "gloomy" was used by Mr. Salim. And as Special Envoy Eliasson put it, "this intractable conflict is still unfolding" (*supra*).

We understand that there is frustration and fatigue there. I think that we have to prevent frustration and fatigue from overcoming us in the Security Council as well. We have to react, and we have to prevent. Like others, we regret that despite all the efforts there has been no real progress in the political process for Darfur since the Addis Ababa conclusions of November 2006. Since the various tracks — political, security and peacekeeping, humanitarian, rule of law and impunity — are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, lack of progress in one has a negative impact on the others. Breaking this vicious circle should be our priority. In this we will require a higher degree of cohesion and unity among Security Council members.

I wonder also whether what Mr. Salim said was exactly the right point, that there is "a need to rethink the strategy on the way forward" (*supra*). I will come back to that. Is it a question of rethinking the strategy or is it a question of shortcomings in the delivery of the strategy that we have. We will have to think about that.

Of course, I think that any new strategy has to remain within the six milestones described by Ambassador Eliasson. I shall not elaborate on this, as Ambassador Sawers has already done so and I fully agree with what he said. Whatever our strategy, it must remain within those milestones. Of course, as Ambassador Kumalo said, we have to be sure that all the pieces are in place; we must not be selecting, picking and choosing here and there. What I am not so sure about is whether I can agree with Ambassador Kumalo when he says that we have to be humble enough, when we hear the appeals for help, to say that we are not in a position to help. I do not know if I would be comfortable with that. Yes, there is frustration and fatigue, but what is important is that there is still hope. I think we must not remove the oxygen from that hope. If we give the perception that for the moment we cannot help, that hope might fade, which I would not like to see. It is our responsibility not to betray the small hope that, one hopes, remains, and we must ensure that there is follow up.

The Security Council has been limited in its action on Darfur by a sort of hesitation to openly and resolutely address each problem on its own terms. Too often we around this table have been constrained by the self-imposed attitude that we must be comprehensive at all costs. We have not been strong enough in addressing the Government's responsibilities regarding UNAMID or the protection of civilians because of the Government's valid concerns with respect to the political process. At the same time, we have refrained from using all the means at our disposal to persuade the rebel movements to join the peace process, because we did not want the Government to see this as a reward for its behaviour.

The result of the situation is there for everybody to see. I think we should honestly assess our performance and renew our collective capacity to address each track of the Darfur crisis with the same determination, but with the necessary individual focus.

Italy sees merit in the proposal mentioned by Special Envoy Salim of a high-level meeting on Darfur, put forward during the recent informal consultations held in Geneva on 4 and 5 June. However, the meeting would have to be well prepared in advance. What is needed now is leadership, direction and a new strategy, not just brainstorming. The time for brainstorming has passed. As I said before, we should also be clear on whether we want to adapt our strategy or to improve its delivery. But the idea is worth studying, and my delegation is ready to engage in any further work on it.

I would also like to support what was said by the Special Envoys about the crucial need to ensure the participation of civil society. This is particularly important in a situation in which, because of the fragmentation of the rebel movements, on which Ambassador Eliasson has put the accent, it is difficult to understand who is representing whom. The representation issue is particularly serious ahead of next year's national elections. Italy has in fact chosen to direct much of its aid to Darfur to civil society, most recently through a contribution of $3 million to the Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund.

Finally, Mr. President, thanks to your delegation we had the privilege last week of hearing important representatives of broader public opinion, who reminded us of the reality of the conflict and of what is expected of the Security Council.

Following that meeting, I am even more convinced that the worst thing we can do is to become accustomed to the lack of progress and give in to the sense of frustration and fatigue that I mentioned earlier. We must accept responsibility, individually and collectively, for resolving the crisis and not let this sense of fatigue prevail, both for the sake of the people of Darfur and for the sake of the credibility of the United Nations.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): I join other Security Council members in welcoming once again the Special Envoys, Mr. Jan Eliasson and Mr. Salim Salim, to the Council. I wish to express my delegation's gratitude to them for their service to peace in Darfur.

The situation in Darfur today is dire, as the Security Council witnessed for itself when visiting the region earlier this month. It is indeed deeply troubling that the Darfur conflict has intensified, that the humanitarian situation has worsened and that the political process has faltered. More than that, however, it is disconcerting that all of this has taken place since the adoption of resolution 1769 (2007) last July and the initiation of the Sirte political process last October.

My delegation remains convinced that the attainment of political reconciliation and agreement has to be at the centre of the settlement of the Darfur crisis by addressing the root causes of the conflict rather than its symptoms. Peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance, and courts of justice can and must complement the political process and perhaps even create the conditions for it, but they cannot be a substitute for it.

We commend the sustained and untiring efforts and hard work of the Special Envoys and the Joint Mediation Support Team. The appointment of an African Union/United Nations joint mediator after the necessary consultations is essential.

My delegation believes that the Security Council, for its part, needs to give greater focus and attention to the political process and to take action as necessary to support the process. The Security Council, together with the Secretary-General, also needs to review the United Nations strategy for Darfur and to identify improvements that could be made. We believe that members of the international community who could prevail upon the rebels have the responsibility to do so. We fully agree with an approach that involves putting pressure on them, as others have mentioned. We also appreciate the potential contribution that the normalization of relations between the Sudan and Chad can make in promoting agreement and reconciliation in Darfur.

Ultimately, however, it is for the parties themselves to come to the table and to achieve a political agreement. They need to understand the unique support of the international community in this endeavour. It is not often that the international community lends its support and helps rebel groups to unify in negotiations with a Government. Therefore, the international community needs to be assured that this course of action remains the most viable one to pursue.

The security situation is increasingly worrying and increasingly compounding the humanitarian situation. We are deeply concerned by reports of humanitarian organizations reducing their operations as a result of the security situation.

In spite of the less than ambitious political process, the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) must take place as scheduled, in order to help, among other things, to strengthen security and protect civilians. The Secretary-General noted in his latest report on UNAMID (S/2008/400) that the security situation has deteriorated throughout Darfur; that significant clashes have continued between tribal groups, between rebel movements and between rebel movements and the Government and its affiliated forces; and that acts of banditry have continued to increase, with attacks against UNAMID and humanitarian personnel. In spite of these difficulties, we need to do all we can to help the people of Darfur.

It is clear that UNAMID's deployment needs to be accelerated as much as possible. There are real hurdles to overcome, not least those related to infrastructure and logistics. In this regard, we urge closer cooperation, coordination and consultation between the Secretariat and UNAMID headquarters on the one hand and the Sudanese authorities on the other.

A military solution is not possible in Darfur; otherwise we would not be discussing the Darfur situation today. All the parties should cease all hostilities even though they have yet to exhaust their energy. That energy should be directed to the negotiating table rather than the battle front. Once again, for us, the political process is key. The plight and the future of the civilian population should be reason enough to re-engage the political process.

Mr. Grauls (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Special Envoys, Mr. Salim and Mr. Eliasson, for their presentations. I would like to thank them also for their tireless efforts over the past 18 months. We would like them to know that Belgium has very much appreciated their commitment.

The briefings that we have just heard confirmed once again how much the political process in Darfur is deadlocked and how tragic the humanitarian situation remains. I would like to focus my statement on a few points.

The parties' lack of political will to engage a negotiating process shows that the international community must review its overall strategy for the region. Even more so than in the past, the international community must in the future provide its political support to the mediation efforts and bring influence to bear on the parties to get them to change their behaviour.

In that context, it seems to us that the idea of a high-level meeting to be convened by the Secretary-General and the African Union presidency should undoubtedly be reactivated, and I think the two Envoys were quite right to offer this proposal. That meeting should obviously be very well prepared, but in our opinion it could make a difference.

The Security Council has remained — let us be honest about this — silent for far too long with regard to the absence of progress. It is time for us to call clearly on the parties to act responsibly. We also need to think seriously about adopting new measures against those who are standing in the way of peace, and to see how we can positively influence the parties who are showing goodwill.

We also welcome the imminent appointment of a joint mediator. We need to find a mechanism to give that mediator the necessary support and political direction.

I wish to express Belgium's extreme concern with regard to the recent deadlock in relations between the Sudan and Chad, a deadlock to which Mr. Eliasson and Mr. Salim alluded. We very much regret the cross-support to rebel movement on both sides of the border. We call upon the Sudan and Chad to respect both the spirit and the letter of the Dakar Agreement. They must work with countries of the region and international partners that are part of the contact group in order to normalize their bilateral relations as soon as possible.

The Council has mandated a hybrid mission that is expensive and complex in order to protect civilians in Darfur. This international commitment makes it even more inadmissible that the parties to the Darfur conflict continue the violence, leading to an increase in the number of displaced persons and other victims. As the Secretary-General has said, no matter how many troops or how much equipment a peacekeeping mission has, it cannot truly exercise its mandate in the midst of open hostilities directed against the civilians it is supposed to protect.

Given the impasse in the political process, I would like to recall the importance of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). It is the basis for any solution to the situation in Darfur. In that context, we welcome the road map concluded between the CPA parties on 8 June to finally resolve the problem of Abyei, and we call upon the parties to implement the road map forthwith.

I would not want to conclude without once again stressing a major priority of my delegation: the fight against impunity in Darfur. The Sudan has a dual obligation in this respect — to cooperate with the International Criminal Court (ICC) in accordance with resolution 1593 (2005) and to work to implement the sanctions imposed by the Security Council. Last week, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2008/21) reminding the Sudan of its obligation to cooperate with the International Criminal Court, including with respect to the arrest warrants with regard to two individuals, one of whom is now a Minister in the Government of the Sudan. It is essential that the Security Council persevere in this approach and that, whenever necessary, it remind the Sudan of its obligations under that resolution.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): First of all, like others, I wish to thank Mr. Jan Eliasson, the United Nations Special Envoy, and Mr. Salim Salim, the African Union (AU) Special Envoy on Darfur, for their respective presentations to the Council this morning.

Viet Nam shares the Secretary-General's concerns about the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Darfur, where tens of thousands of people continue to be homeless, to live in dire conditions and to fall victim to various violent acts. We condemn all acts of violence against civilians and humanitarian aid workers. My delegation is also deeply concerned over the worsening security and humanitarian situation in Darfur. Military actions have further complicated the situation and the political process. We call on the parties concerned to exercise the utmost restraint and to cease military and violent activities. We urge the rebel groups, in particular those that have not signed the peace agreement, to renounce the use of force and to engage in the peace process, with a view to reaching a comprehensive solution ensuring the legitimate interests of all parties concerned.

My delegation highly commends the activities of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), especially under such difficult circumstances on the ground, where the force has not been enhanced in terms of either manpower or equipment. The deployment of UNAMID on time and in full capacity in accordance with resolution 1769 (2007) is extremely important to promote the political process and to improve the humanitarian and security situation in the region. Member States should fulfil their committed contributions to UNAMID promptly so that the force can fulfil its mandate. My country highly values the roles played by the United Nations and the African Union, and strongly supports the efforts made by the Secretary-General and the United Nations and African Union Special Envoys, Mr. Jan Eliasson and Mr. Salim Salim, in promoting the peace process in Darfur. We also support the appointment of a United Nations-AU joint chief mediator, who will assist the work of the Special Envoys and promote the peace process.

Finally, we note with profound regret the recent events taking place in the border area between Chad and the Sudan, which have strained bilateral relations and complicated the regional situation. Viet Nam wishes to call upon the Governments of both Chad and the Sudan to exercise the utmost restraint and to comply with the provisions of the Dakar Accord, particularly to resolve the conflicts through peaceful negotiations.

Mr. Vilović (Croatia): First of all, like other members I would like to extend our thanks to the Special Envoys, Mr. Jan Eliasson and Mr. Salim Salim, not only for today's briefings, but also for the work they have been carrying out over the past 18 months. We would like to extend our strong support for their work.

We express our deep frustration that the situation in Darfur and other parts of the Sudan deteriorated further during the reporting period. Not only did the security and humanitarian situation, which was very bad some months ago, deteriorate further, but the political process, despite the ongoing mediation efforts, stalled, and there is clearly no political will among the parties to cease hostilities and pursue substantive negotiations. What is more, some parties possess no political will to pursue a political solution to the situation.

In that regard, we affirm the central role of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). We welcome the announced appointment of a joint chief mediator and express our deep hope that this would be a step forward in the direction of getting all sides together at the negotiating table. There is always obviously a clear link between security situations, political processes and humanitarian situations. That is so in Darfur as well. The experience of our recent visit to Darfur makes it clear that security is a precondition for all other processes. We have seen the situation on the ground; we have talked to the people in the camps for refugees and internally displaced persons, and obviously there is a feeling of despair, which is caused primarily by security concerns, which are extremely grave.

One of the facets of the security element is, of course, respect for and implementation of the arms embargo. There is obviously a need to cut the free flow of arms throughout the Sudan and throughout the region. The arms embargo should be fully respected by all actors.

The deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), as has already been mentioned today — and before — is slow. Even the targeted figure of 80 per cent by the end of the year is not satisfactory. It is not only an issue of the pace of the deployment, but also an issue of equipment. That is also where we are facing problems. During the visit, it was stressed — at least this was my understanding — that the crucial issue is that of helicopters. It should be part of our responsibility to try not only to ensure that deployment is on time, but also to get the equipment delivered on time.

It was mentioned that another precondition is the normalization of relations between the Sudan and Chad. We saw how this issue influences not only the whole political process, but also the concrete security and humanitarian situation on the ground. Today, in the briefings and in our discussion, it was stressed that, all stakeholders should be involved in the future political process, which means not only the Government and not only the movements, but also the representatives of civil society and traditional leaders. We think that that direction is the only possible one. We saw on the ground how important that structure, that portion of society is.

We also welcome the announcement regarding the convening of a high-level meeting, but we stress that this meeting, as has already been noted today, must be well prepared. I believe it was the Italian representative who said that we have no time for brainstorming sessions, we must really have well-prepared high-level meetings.

Allow me to say that, while Darfur should remain in our focus, there are other very pressing points that should not be overlooked. The north-south conflict continues to affect large numbers of people as well, as recently demonstrated by the tragic events in Abyei. Therefore, the continued implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement is relevant and necessary.

Finally, allow me to stress a point that has been raised already. It has been said that there are no confidence-building measures on the ground, that there is an obvious lack of them. In our opinion, one of the key elements in such confidence-building measures is the issue of impunity, an issue that was stressed during our visit. We saw that bringing those responsible for crimes to justice would contribute greatly to public support for confidence-building measures. In our talks on the subject with officials in Khartoum, we stressed our conviction that all sides must cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court and implement the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We too are grateful to the Special Envoys of the Secretary-General and of the African Union, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim, for their substantive briefings on ways to move the Darfur political process forward in order to ensure an effective settlement of the crisis there. The analysis provided by the Special Envoys reaffirms that international efforts on a Darfur settlement, in particular through the Security Council, must be focused on maintaining a maximally inclusive negotiating process among the sides in Darfur under the aegis of the United Nations and the African Union.

In our view, resuming political contacts between the Government and the Darfur opposition in order to achieve speedy agreements on the cessation of hostilities is of the highest priority. Moving forward the political process would unquestionably promote a strengthening of security in Darfur. It would also allow for the speeding up of the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). The lack of such consistent progress on a political settlement makes the efforts undertaken, including peacekeeping efforts, ineffective as regards a long-term solution to the crisis in Darfur. It is obvious that the deployment of UNAMID, which indeed should be speeded up as soon as possible, in itself will not lead to a long-term solution to the crisis.

We share the views of the Special Envoys regarding the primary responsibility of the Sudanese themselves for the fate of the settlement and, in the last analysis, for the fate of the country. The obstacles on the road to a political settlement as of today are primarily being created by some of the Darfur rebel groups.

Today we have heard confirmation from the Special Envoys of the highly negative fact that there continues to be a splintering of the rebel groups. The leaders of the rebel groups are not in a position to agree upon a unified political negotiating platform. Moreover, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) is openly embarking upon the path of armed struggle against the Government of the Sudan. It is also obvious that the rebels have well-developed channels for the purchase of arms and for obtaining financial assistance. There is no need to reiterate that all of the Security Council decisions on Darfur, including on the arms embargo, must be implemented fully by all parties.

We believe that, as regards the leaders of the irreconcilable rebel groups, appropriate measures must be taken, up to and including sanctions. We have listened very carefully to the views presented by Ambassador Kumalo of South Africa, and we share those views. We also express our hope that the appointment by the Secretary-General of a joint mediator for the political process in Darfur, which we expect very soon, will provide a substantive impetus for the resumption of negotiations among the Darfur sides.

Naturally, we welcome the great contribution of the Special Envoys, Mr. Eliasson and Mr. Salim, to the cause of re-establishing peace and normal life in Darfur. Their experience and knowledge will undoubtedly be required in the future as well.

We fully support and share the argument of the Secretary-General regarding the indivisibility of peace in Sudan. Progress on a settlement for the south of Sudan will determine to a significant extent progress in resolving the conflict in Darfur. We welcome, in that connection, the recent agreements on the settlement of the problem in Abyei, and we are counting on the fact that those agreements will be fully implemented by both parties. The Security Council recently had an opportunity to take a stand on that issue, and we remain devoted to that stand.

What is also of the greatest importance is the normalization of bilateral relations between Sudan and Chad. Once again, I would like to state that we share the views of the Special Envoys on that subject. We agree with their conclusions with regard to the significance of the regional dimension in resolving the problems of Sudan and also of the importance, for the stability of the entire African continent, of preserving the unity and territorial integrity of Sudan.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I was recently able to speak with the President of Côte d'Ivoire, President Gbagbo, and I told him that my country, as a nation of Latin America, did not have any strategic involvement in Africa. When we examine African realities, we try to do so in a spirit of good faith and we truly try to make a contribution to the peace processes in the region.

It is with that same attitude that we approach the issue of Sudan and the region. We have advocated many times in this Council for a regional approach. There are bandits such as Joseph Kony skipping around from one country to another in the region to elude his pursuers. Today the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) is searching for him, tomorrow it could be the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) or the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). Everyone is after him, but our efforts remain disjointed. Today we have heard the Special Envoys state that the problems in the region are really one problem. The international community must first deal with this entire, singular problem in all its complexity.

I should briefly like to emphasize the need for the Government of the Sudan to provide certain conditions that seem to us fundamental: working conditions for the United Nations missions, security for the missions and security for humanitarian workers. When we talked with representatives of humanitarian organizations in Darfur — and with the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) itself — they told us about the loss of almost $2 million in vehicles and equipment. Humanitarian organizations told us about the lives lost and the times they were attacked. They also told us about the restrictions on movement imposed on them and how it was impossible to go about in rented vehicles beyond certain areas. In other words, there are too many restrictions. I believe that primary responsibility falls on the Government of the Sudan, which must have a more open attitude towards the international community.

In Friendship Hall, we 15 ambassadors heard presidential adviser Mr. Nafi Ali Nafi speak without hesitation about his Government's major concerns and reservations with regard to United Nations actions. Listening to and reading the reports of the Special Envoys, I am now struck by their assessment of the internal divisions within the various movements and their will, or lack thereof, to participate. I truly understand what they have both said. I feel that their reports contain little assessment of the attitude of the Government of the Sudan. As understandable as that may be, it nevertheless seems to me that the Council can hardly act consistently without a fairly clear picture of the Government of the Sudan's attitude with regard to the efforts of the United Nations.

It is worth recalling that the United Nations will spend $2.3 to $2.4 billion in the Sudan this year. As the representative of a country that does not have strategic interests in the region, I genuinely feel that this is a Government with deep distrust of the actions of the United Nations. It is a Government that ignores the resolutions adopted by the Security Council under the provisions of Chapter VII of the Charter. It is a Government that does not make any link between peace and justice. It is a Government that, with a certain degree of insolence, continues to keep Mr. Ahmad Harun as its Minister for Humanitarian Affairs and has not brought to justice Mr. Ali Kushayb, a well-known member of the Janjaweed who is also the subject of an arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court. One therefore legitimately wonders about the meaning of such action.

I agree with Mr. Eliasson and Mr. Salim that it is necessary to achieve consistency at the various levels of action. I believe there needs to be consistency in the international community and in regional efforts. We have not achieved that yet, but those are areas in which we can continue to work. I believe that achieving consistency in international efforts vis-à-vis the Government of the Sudan is an enormous task at the moment. We must approach it positively and in a spirit of cooperation and of making a contribution and building confidence. In that connection, we welcome the idea of a joint mediator. We are certain that, along with the work of the two Special Envoys, that should contribute to creating trust between the United Nations and the Government of the Sudan. Such understanding is absolutely essential. If we can achieve it, I am sure that the movements, militias and groups disrupting the peace in Darfur and the Sudan can see their problems resolved.

Do forgive me, Mr. President, for deviating from my written statement. Having listened to my colleagues and the Special Envoys, my delegation and I would be very grateful if the Special Envoys, if they deem it appropriate, could give the Council an assessment of how they feel about the Government of the Sudan.

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to thank Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim and my great friend former General Assembly President Eliasson for their briefings. I would also like to convey to them the gratitude of the Republic of Panama for their tireless efforts and personal dedication to this difficult task. We hope they will continue to work as vigorously as they have in the past.

There are currently three closely interlinked socio-political processes under way in the Sudan that involve the Security Council. These are the peace process; the deployment and operationalization of the Hybrid Operation; and the decision of the Council to refer the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court. None of those processes is making the appropriate progress expected. As pointed out by Mr. Eliasson and Mr. Salim, the failure of the peace process is in large part due to the failure, both on the part of the Khartoum Government and certain rebel groups, to decide to begin a political dialogue. Moreover, some of the rebel groups are being supported by influential members of the international community from within and outside the region.

With regard to the deployment of the Hybrid Operation, despite a small amount of progress, there is a clear lack of cooperation on the part of the Khartoum Government. In addition, despite significant efforts in that regard by the Organization, including the Security Council and the Secretariat, the United Nations has not been able to put together the necessary troops and equipment to allow the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur to carry out its mandate.

With regard to the decision of the Council to refer the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court, the Court has carried out the task given to it. Nevertheless, the Council has not provided the support that decision merits. In that connection, I cannot fail to refer to the words of President Kabila as cited here by Ambassador Sawers:

(*spoke in English*)

> "... one cannot put justice aside and hope for a durable peace ..." (*supra*).

(*spoke in Spanish*)

If we add to the foregoing the repeated breakdown of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement — as recently reflected in the reprehensible destruction of the town of Abyei — and the conflict between the

Governments of the Sudan and Chad, we cannot but conclude that, despite the words of Ambassador Spatafora, we are facing a fairly hopeless situation. Given that situation, we cannot hope to overcome the violence in Darfur and in the Sudan in general unless the Council and all Members of the United Nations act differently and in greater conformity with the decisions of the Council. As Mr. Eliasson has said, that will require that we provide incentives and disincentives to the parties to the conflict. As the Permanent Representative of Libya said, it will require more active participation by civil society and traditional leaders. And as the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom said, it will require strengthening the current sanctions, especially the arms embargo, and the imposition of new sanctions if necessary.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United States.

Many points have been made, and the discussion has gone on for a while. I shall therefore be brief and will make just a few points.

First of all, I want to thank the two Special Envoys for their service and for their briefings today. They have described well the situation and the challenges that we face. They have challenged the Security Council; now, the ball is in our court as to what to do in the face of what they have described. I would like to emphasize a few points drawn from their briefings and to speak of what we need to do.

Secondly, the situation could, of course, get worse. Therefore, the first task for us is to determine what we can do to avoid that. Certainly, if the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is not implemented — if the North-South agreement falls apart — the situation in the Sudan could get a lot worse. Therefore, it is very important that we remain attentive to the implementation of the CPA. Right after this meeting, the Council will issue a presidential statement with regard to Abyei; that should send the good message that the Council remains engaged and focused on the issue of the CPA. That has to be a continuing preoccupation of ours in the coming period.

The third point I would like to make is with regard to the security situation. I think it is clear, at least to me and to my delegation, that that is fundamental: without security — or improved security, as we will not be able to have perfect security for some time to come — everything is at risk. I do not think you can have much political progress in an environment where there is the current degree of insecurity. I will come to the political track later, but we know that there are many sources of insecurity. Addressing all of them simultaneously is also a considerable challenge. There are internal factors and external, regional, factors that affect the security situation.

One thing that is a very important help with regard to security is the deployment of an effective African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). The Council has expressed itself unanimously on this issue. Unfortunately, the deployment has not taken place as expected in terms of speed and the effectiveness of the force. There are challenges that we need to address and that we need to be more attentive to, in our view. One of these is to make sure that we are attentive to the Secretariat: that the United Nations and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations do what they need to do. Several colleagues spoke about the logistics requirement, which needs to be addressed. There are resources available: money that has been dedicated to this effort. But I think that this has been rather slow. The United Nations — the Secretariat — can and should do more, and we need to be more attentive in order to make sure that our intent is well understood and that all possible speed that can be generated is indeed generated.

Also, I think frankly that we have not been tough enough with the Government of Sudan. I think it has been, shall we say, dragging its feet with regard to the implementation of an effective force, and colleagues have not been prepared to incentivize that Government appropriately. I think we need to look at what we can do and what should be done to make sure that an effective force is in place. Sometimes, the willingness of the Government to negotiate on the political track is being used as a shield to avoid pressuring it on these other things as much as it needs to be pressured. I think that to deal with this problem we need to focus on this.

The third point is the issue of getting the right capabilities there. All of us need to redouble our efforts to get the international community to ensure that the capabilities are made available, whether it be heavy-lift or medium-lift capacity or helicopters. For our part, the United States, of course, is spending about $100 million to get African forces — 6,000 of them at least — to the level of capability where they can be deployed there as quickly as possible. I think we could be more focused in order to encourage the deployment or availability of appropriate assets.

Also, I think one factor that affects the situation is the arms in the area. We need to look at the situation with regard to the embargo — several colleagues have raised this — and see whether the embargo is being implemented effectively or not.

I will briefly touch on the fourth point, on the political process. It is obviously very important. Ultimately, without it there cannot be peace in Darfur or in Sudan. The challenges have been outlined very well: the fragmentation of the rebel movements; the disagreements among rebel groups; the Government policies, not only with regard to Darfur — although it has been willing to negotiate — but also, as mentioned, its policies relating to the CPA; and the regional rivalries that exist. All of that makes this difficult. We have to look at whether there are ways in which we could incentivize the parties to move. What can each of us do, or what can we — or some subset of us — do together to do better?

We welcome the imminent appointment of a chief mediator. Ambassador Kumalo said we should pray for him; we will do more than that: we will pray for him and we will cooperate with him as well. I know that he will face a serious challenge, and for him to succeed we need to see how to incentivize the various parties.

In my view, we would be mistaken to expect a lot from the political track in the short term, given the difficulties that exist. Therefore, I think that the short-term focus needs to be more on the security track: to improve the security environment by having more capable forces there.

My last point is that I think that the situation — which some colleagues have described as gloomy or difficult — could lead one to be fatigued and perhaps to say that there is not much we can do about it and that we have to learn to live with the situation. I think that would be a mistake. I think it is important to restate that this is an important situation with huge implications, not only in political and security terms, as was described very ably by the two Special Envoys, but also in terms of the terrible humanitarian situation. It therefore needs to remain a focus of our efforts. Certainly, it is for my Government. But also, we have to recognize that our own credibility, as the Security Council, is at stake here, given the resolutions we have adopted and the resources that are being spent and that there is a willingness to spend.

What we need to do is to adjust our approach, to be more effective than we have been, because there is certainly a big gap between where we want to be and where we are. Thus, I think that the two Special Envoys have provided us with some issues to consider — and to consider seriously. Again, I want to thank them for their service and for their briefings today. My country holds both of them in high regard.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Eliasson to respond to comments and questions raised.

Mr. Eliasson: I thank the members of the Security Council for their very constructive and productive remarks, and also for the strong support they have expressed for our work. I think we have identified certain directions in which we should go in the future.

I am pleased that members referred to the six points that I mentioned in my presentation. As to one of those points, namely the north-south relationship to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), I would like to provide members with some additional information. This relationship is crucial for Darfur and, of course, for Sudan as a whole.

As to the terms of reference of the new joint chief mediator, a role whose creation we have proposed for a long time, we would recommend that he take into consideration the regional and national dimensions of the issues. Those criteria were not contained in our terms of reference, but we hope that, in the light of this discussion, it is seen as a constructive step forward. In a way, the mandate has been widened, not in a formal manner that will require the mediator to deal in detail with these issues, but one simply cannot deal with Darfur without taking into consideration the relationship with Chad, for instance, and the relationship to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Another aspect that I would like to mention, in response to the question posed by my friend Mr. Kumalo, is the issue of incentives and disincentives as well as action taken or pressures brought to bear by the Security Council. This is a difficult question for Salim and me to answer. We are in the business of mediation, of bringing the parties together. We try to present a fair report on the situation, but then it is the role of the Security Council to draw conclusions from our reports. I must say, however, that in the course of our talks it has been helpful to know and to remind the parties that the Council has to take certain measures and has certain tools to use. I remember in particular the presidential statement that the Council issued on 24 October 2007, where it was stated that parties — including, of course, both the Government and the movements — that obstruct the political process, the peacekeeping operation or the humanitarian operations, will be subject to measures from the Security Council. At times, Salim and I reminded the parties of the Council's action and it certainly had an effect. I think similar discussions should take place at present.

I think it is important that members look both at incentives and disincentives. Talks have to be an attractive option for the movements as well. Here, I believe the Government has a particular role to play, not only as the party with the resources and responsibilities for the security and prosperity of the nation, but also as the party that could deliver at least some constructive ideas on power-sharing, wealth-sharing and security.

The movements are constantly asking about compensation for the horrible years of 2003 to 2005 and are asking for the disarmament of the Janjaweed militias. We are asking the Government to send signals of a more concrete nature so that the incentives are also coming from the Government side. I believe it important that there be a new reminder from the Council, similar to the message contained in the 24 October presidential statement, which emanates from Council's latest consideration of the issues.

I was asked whether the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) had a national agenda. Yes, it does have a national agenda, and I think that that is one of the reasons why the Government reacts more strongly vis-à-vis JEM than with respect other movements, apart from the fact, of course, that there was an offensive attack against Umdurman in the neighbourhood of Khartoum only a few weeks ago.

I would claim that we should probably continue to encourage a process for talks or dialogue with the JEM. The Government is now aiming to put JEM on terrorists lists and the like. That is not something with which we as mediators will become involved. But I believe it to be important that channels of communication also be extended to the JEM in line with the conclusion that we usually reach in conflicts around the world, namely, that in the end one has to speak to one's enemy, one has to speak to the parties relevant for the ending of the conflict.

The issue of impunity was raised. This is not, again, part of our negotiation mandate, but I still wish to repeat one point I made during my presentation, which places impunity in a larger context. Respect for human rights and the rule of law is crucial for trust to be established, for a credible political process to be made possible and for reconciliation to occur. We made that point in our general perspective where I believed it to be appropriate.

My last point is related to the Council President's very good summary of today's discussion. I believe it to be important for us not to fall into despair and passivity. On the contrary, with the situation reaching such a serious level and the margins being so thin out there — we have been in the field, we have seen women crying out for water, we have seen kids dying more or less in front of us, we have seen the despair in the eyes of the people — I think it is now extremely important that we take a realistic approach, both in the short-term and in the long-term. I believe the short-term perspective should be that everyone should feel a responsibility to make sure that we do not have an escalation of hostilities, in fact, that we take steps in the direction of a cessation of hostilities, and that we are extremely sharp with everyone or anyone who goes down the military road.

There is no military solution to the problems in Darfur. We have to prove that point, and I believe we have to make that point not only as mediators or as the Security Council or as the African Union Peace and Security Council, but also all of us individually, representing nations that, for example, in your case, Mr. President, sit on this extremely powerful body responsible for international peace and security.

So I believe we also need to mobilize our individual countries' leverage and influence. Only if we do this, only if we show that there is a solid front in denouncing insecurity and stopping escalation, that we can now make a contribution. By that, as you, Sir, just said, we can create the environment in which we can then take the steps more in the medium-term, but as soon as possible, for a credible political process. I think that that is an agenda. It is not driving us into hopelessness; rather, it is a realistic approach. Let us deal with security and then take the step to a credible political process.

With those remarks, I thank the Council for calling this meeting and giving us the opportunity to have a discussion in such an open and transparent fashion as we have done today.

The President: I thank Mr. Eliasson for the clarifications and responses that he has provided.

I now give the floor to Mr. Salim to respond to comments and questions raised.

Mr. Salim: Like my colleague, I would also like to thank the Council for the opportunity given us, and also for the serious attention with which the Council has been addressing this issue. I shall also be very brief in answering the specific issues that were raised, in particular the link between the political process and the issue of security.

Ideally, we would obtain an agreement, and then life would become much more comfortable for everybody, especially for the peacekeepers. But that is the ideal. The reality on the ground is that there is no such agreement. The reality on the ground is that unless you address the issue of security the political process becomes impossible.

Wherever we went, whatever we discussed, whether it was with the representatives of the internally displaced persons or the representatives of civil society, whether it was in areas I covered in my statement, in Government areas or in areas controlled by the rebels, everybody has been talking about security, security, security. So the issue of security becomes important. Therefore, the question of the rapid deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) becomes important.

I want to say one more thing on this point. The African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) was there, and it did a lot under very, very difficult circumstances. But AMIS began to lose credibility because it did not have the required resources and the required equipment. Now there is a danger that if nothing is done to really beef up UNAMID, it will face same problems that AMIS had. I talked earlier about the euphoria of expectations. When we were in Darfur everybody was waiting for UNAMID. Everybody was talking about how important it was to have UNAMID. But the minute they begin to see that, really, the difference between UNAMID and AMIS is very small, there will be a problem. So I think that it is in the interest, not only of the peace process, but also for the credibility of the Security Council, that this question is addressed in an effective manner.

The engagement of civil society, I think, is a must, and as Jan has pointed out, initially, both the Government and the movements were totally opposed to any idea of involvement with civil society. Now we have begun to see some change. As he said, the Government of the Sudan has told us clearly that they are supportive of the idea of civil society. But in the final analysis, you have got to involve these people, because neither the Government nor the movements can claim to have exclusive representation of the people of Darfur. There are people, whether traditional leaders or civil society organizations, who want peace. One thing that comes out in this situation is that the people in Darfur want peace. Irrespective of their political affiliation, irrespective of where they are located, they want peace.

On the question of incentives and disincentives, I think my friend Jan has responded rightly. He used the words "incentives and disincentives". If you go through my speech, you will see that I used the phrase "encourage or discourage". But basically what we are saying is that the Council must be in a position to do something. I would humbly caution against repeated warnings which have no follow-up action, warnings like "if you do this, something will happen; if you do not do that, something else will happen". And nothing happens. Then not only is the credibility of the Council is at stake, but even the capacity of those who are involved in the peace process becomes somewhat impaired. So I would say that, yes, there is a need for encouragement or incentives, and there is a need also for discouragement or disincentives.

On the question of inclusion, I think that inclusion is very important, as Jan said also. We know the position of the Government of the Sudan. We know how they feel after the attack on Omdurman. But the response of the international community has been swift. Going beyond that, one cannot say that a given party should be excluded. I think that it should be the movement itself which excludes itself from the process. You should not start excluding people from the negotiations, especially a movement which has some degree of support — although I understand full well, as was rightly explained, that there is a feeling that JEM's agenda goes beyond Darfur.

In specific response to the representative of Costa Rica, I will say this: In both of our statements, we have made it very clear that primary responsibility for the situation in Darfur must be that of the Government of the Sudan. There are areas where the Government of the Sudan has not responded regarding what we expect them to do. For example, every time that we have gone to Khartoum, we have repeatedly appealed for the non-utilization of aerial bombardment. We have said very clearly that there should be a proportionate response. What do we mean by this? If there is an attack, for example, like JEM's attack, it is logical for the Government of the Sudan to exercise self-defence. However, when one uses air power and the air power affects not only the movements but also ordinary civilians, then there is a problem. That is why we have been insisting on that.

Secondly, at this point in time, when it comes to negotiations, it is very difficult to hold the Government of the Sudan responsible, because they say all the time that they are ready for negotiations. Maybe we can say that, although they say that they are ready to negotiate, perhaps in their hearts and minds they are not ready. You cannot argue on that basis; you can only argue on the basis of what is real. I think it is important to reach a stage where the Government of the Sudan will be tested, and they can only be tested in negotiations: What is your position on power sharing? What is your position on wealth sharing? What is your position on the question of security? When we reach that stage, then we will be in a position to say whether or not the Government of the Sudan is cooperating on the question of negotiations.

Finally, after my limited experience in dealing with the Darfur question, I will say this: when we talk of incentives and disincentives, they must be universally applied. Even though, as I said, the Government of the Sudan bears primary responsibility, it would be wrong to assume that on the one hand you have all the nice guys and on the other hand you have all the bad guys. That is not true. In other words, therefore, you have to deal with the nice guys and the bad guys wherever they appear, whether they come from the Government side or the side of the movements.

The President: I thank Mr. Salim for his comments and clarifications.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5923

Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5923rd meeting

Tuesday, 24 June 2008, 12.45 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Khalilzad	(United States of America)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Roelants de Stappers
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Veyssière
	Indonesia	Mr. Kleib
	Italy	Mr. Azzarello
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 12.45 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Following consultations among the members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "The Security Council welcomes the 8 June Road Map for the Return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Implementation of the Abyei Protocol (the Road Map) between the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). The Security Council emphasizes that a peaceful resolution of the situation in Abyei is vital to the effective implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and peace in the region. The Security Council welcomes the agreements in the Road Map, including its provisions regarding revenue sharing and the interim boundaries in Abyei. The Security Council urges the parties to use the opportunity created by the signing of the Road Map to resolve all outstanding issues related to CPA implementation and welcomes the parties' commitment to take unresolved issues to arbitration as necessary.
>
> "The Security Council deeply regrets the recent outbreak of fighting in Abyei, the ensuing displacement of civilians and the obstruction of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) freedom of movement. The Security Council urges the parties to facilitate immediate humanitarian support for the displaced citizens and support for their voluntary return as soon as an interim administration and the agreed security arrangements are in place.
>
> "The Security Council encourages the parties to fully implement the Road Map within the agreed timelines, in particular with the establishment of an Abyei Area Administration; deployment of a new Joint Integrated Unit battalion; ensuring of free movement for UNMIS forces in the Abyei area and access to the north and south of the Abyei area to carry out its mandate to support implementation of the CPA; and redeployment of the Sudan Armed Forces and SPLM troops outside the interim Abyei administrative area agreed to by the parties.
>
> "The Security Council calls on UNMIS, within its mandate and in accordance with Security Council resolution 1812 (2008), to robustly deploy, as appropriate, peacekeeping personnel in and around Abyei to help reduce tensions and prevent escalation of conflict, in support of implementation of the CPA. The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to examine the root causes of and the role played by UNMIS in connection with the violence between the parties in Abyei in May 2008 and consider what follow-up steps may be appropriate for UNMIS."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2008/24.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

United Nations

S/PV.5924

Security Council

Provisional

Sixty-third year

5924th meeting

Tuesday, 24 June 2008, 3.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Khalilzad/Mr. Wolff	(United States of America)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Grauls
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Letter dated 11 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Djibouti to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/387)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

Letter dated 11 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Djibouti to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/387)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Djibouti and Eritrea, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I request the Protocol Officer to escort His Excellency Mr. Dileita Mohamed Dileita, Prime Minister of Djibouti, to a seat at the Council table.

Mr. Dileita Mohamed Dileita, Prime Minister of Djibouti, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

The President: On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to Mr. Dileita Mohamed Dileita, Prime Minister of Djibouti.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. João Honwana, Director of the Africa Division of the Department of Political Affairs.

It is so decided.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mrs. Alice Mungwa, Adviser in the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union.

It is so decided.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Yahya Mahmassani, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in response to a letter dated 11 June 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Djibouti addressed to the President of the Security Council, which is contained in document S/2008/387.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. João Honwana, Director of the Africa Division of the Department of Political Affairs, to whom I now give the floor.

Mr. Honwana: At the request of the Council, I have the honour to present an update on the latest reports we have received about the situation on the border between Djibouti and Eritrea. At the outset, I would like to reiterate that the United Nations does not have a presence in the area and that this briefing relies only on reports we have received. I look forward to hearing the Prime Minister's briefing for greater detail.

Since the Secretariat's last briefing to the Council, all our interlocutors have described the situation at the border as calm but tense, with military regroupings on either side of the border. Apparently, the de facto ceasefire that Djibouti and Eritrea have observed since last week continues to hold. According to local Somali radio, Eritrea has reportedly deployed heavy military equipment in Ras Doumeira, north-east of Obock. Another source reported the reinforcement of Eritrean troops near the town of Daddato, located north-west of Obock. That may indicate tensions in the north-west and the north-east of Djibouti. A Somali newspaper also reported that, on 15 June, an Eritrean gunboat was sunk after being hit by a missile. All the crew of the gunboat are believed dead and it is not known whether the missile was fired by a French warship or the Djiboutian navy.

While the local press and other sources report that Djiboutian forces have reoccupied lost ground and have massively regrouped near the border, other reports indicate that they have in fact retreated to a position about four kilometres from the border in order to be out of range of Eritrean mortars. We also understand that there is a new Ethiopian military presence on the Ethiopian side of the meeting point of the borders between Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti.

Reportedly, some 300 French troops have been placed in the north-east of Djibouti to provide medical and logistical support to the Djiboutian army. The State Secretary of the French Ministry of Defence was expected to arrive in Djibouti today. He is expected to meet with President Ismail Omar Guelleh to discuss the border crisis and to visit French troops.

On 11 June, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea issued a press statement accusing Djibouti of conducting hostile anti-Eritrean campaigns and "concocted animosity". On 12 June, Eritrean State radio in the local Tigrigna language blamed Djibouti for the border issue and accused the United States of inflaming regional conflicts. That was in response to a United States State Department press release issued earlier that condemned "Eritrea's military aggression against Djibouti".

On the same day, during an emergency meeting, the League of Arab States called on Eritrea to withdraw its forces from the border area. France and Egypt have also urged Eritrea to allow mediation efforts into the conflict. In addition, on 12 June, the African Union joined the United Nations in calling for talks between Eritrea and Djibouti to end the border clashes. In a statement, the African Union Peace and Security Council urged the two countries to show maximum restraint, resort to dialogue to resolve any bilateral disputes and give their full cooperation to all efforts in that regard.

The Secretariat remains in close contact with our colleagues in the region and regularly meets with the Permanent Representatives to receive views from both sides. In a meeting with me on 19 June, the Permanent Representative of Eritrea acknowledged that skirmishes had occurred in the border area a few days before, but he said that Djibouti had initiated the attack and that Eritrea had only reacted in self-defence. He blamed the United States for creating wars in the Horn of Africa region. He also reiterated Eritrea's peaceful intentions towards Djibouti and questioned the Security Council's hastiness in issuing a presidential statement last week. He furthermore mentioned that the African Group would hold a meeting on the border issue with the League of Arab States, as well as the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Eritrea, in New York on 23 June. He claimed that Djiboutian dramatization and internationalization of the border incident had gotten out of hand.

In turn, on the same day, the Permanent Representative of Djibouti said that the situation at the border was very risky and could ignite into a war at any minute. Many soldiers had died as a result of the fighting and there were numerous troops and heavy equipment present at the border. He said that Eritrea had thus far failed to explain the reasons for its military presence in the area and refused to resume dialogue with Djibouti. Eritrea had also rebuffed the President of Yemen's offer to act as a mediator. The Permanent Representative added that Djibouti had never had any intention of waging war, but had been forced to respond to the attacks by Eritrea on the ground. He stated that the current state of affairs was costly to Djibouti and that both countries needed to return to the status quo ante.

The Secretary-General had an excellent meeting with the Prime Minister of Djibouti yesterday. The Prime Minister reiterated that this was a war situation involving massive military regrouping on either side of the border. They agreed on the urgent need to resolve the situation through dialogue and confidence-building and a return to the status quo ante. We believe that the ceasefire should be consolidated, the matter should be settled peacefully and the status quo ante should be restored.

The President: I thank Mr. Honwana for his briefing. I now invite the Prime Minister of Djibouti, His Excellency Mr. Dileita Mohamed Dileita, to take the floor.

Mr. Dileita (Djibouti) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to present to the Council my Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Mahamoud Ali Youssouf, who has travelled here with me today.

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the manner in which you have been leading the work of the Council and for your delegation's efforts last week throughout the consultation process, designed to draw the attention of the members of the Security Council to the great urgency of the conflict between Djibouti and Eritrea. I would also like to extend my thanks to Mr. João Honwana for his briefing to the Council today.

I am pleased to meet again with members of the Council whom I met during their visit to Djibouti within the framework of inter-Somali peace talks, which produced the peace accord that has given rise within the international community to great hope and that is a solid basis for a lasting peace in Somalia. I would also like to state how pleased we have been, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and myself, to have spoken with most of members of the Council in a climate of confidence and brotherhood since our arrival here in the New York.

May I remind members of the Council of the origins of this latest crisis in the Horn of Africa, which has had more than its share of war, destruction and regression of all types, and which we could have, in our view, done well without. The relations between Djibouti and Eritrea since the independence of Eritrea in 1993 have encountered difficulties that, thus far, have been overcome thanks to a determination to settle any misunderstanding through dialogue. The conflict which today has already caused many casualties since Eritrean troops attacked positions of the Djibouti army on 10 June, forcing it to defend its territory, is deserving of the attention of the members of this important United Nations body, the mandate of which is the maintenance of international peace and security, pursuant to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

I am not here simply to make unfounded allegations against Eritrea; it would not be a good idea to make such a long trip with the intention of discrediting Eritrean leaders. We have never and will never be part of an anti-Eritrean front. Quite the contrary, we have always tried to maintain pragmatic relations with that country. We believe that the international community should be well informed of the ins and outs of this conflict because the situation on the ground remains of great concern.

The current crisis is very different from the preceding ones for several reasons. First of all, it is different in its form because, for the first time, Eritrean troops have not only violated Djiboutian territory, but they have occupied it and have even begun construction work on our soil. Furthermore, it is different as to substance because while all previous attempts were more or less avowed claims of an important part of our Djiboutian territory, the current motivations are still obscure and suspect in the eyes of Djiboutian authorities.

In the absence of a clear explanation on the part of the Eritrean leaders, our Government has strong suspicions that they are guided by greed caused by the avowed ambition of Djibouti to become a regional cross-border maritime hub with the construction of a new modern port and infrastructure projects. Thanks to the confidence of investors and our position in this area of the Red Sea which is highly strategic for world navigation, Djibouti has embarked upon the path of growth and development in order to become a regional trading centre.

But also we think that the Asmara authorities are pursuing their confrontation with Ethiopia through a conflict with Djibouti, through which transits most of the merchandise headed for Ethiopia. Thus, it is without question an attempt to regionalize the conflict.

The Council is not at all ignorant of how much the impasse in the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea constitutes a major source of instability in the Horn of Africa, in particular for peace in Somalia. The international community must therefore bring all its weight to bear until Eritrea begins to take into account the minimum international standards involved in relations between nations.

Finally, we cannot pass over in silence the fact that the attack of the Eritrean army took place immediately following the signing in Djibouti of an agreement between part of the opposition in Somalia and the Somali Transitional Government under the aegis of the United Nations. At this stage, we are entitled to ask legitimate questions about the role supposedly played by the Asmara authorities and the use that they have made of the Somali conflict which, in our view, should not be used as a tool.

As for the Eritrean authorities, they are indeed remaining mysterious as to their true objectives and are hiding behind a total denial of the dispute, or when they implicitly deign to admit the existence of the dispute that they make unfounded and unreasonable allegations by referring to external interference that would supposedly be the cause of all the tensions in the region. Of course, we believe that this attitude of denying reality is irresponsible since the media throughout the world have reported an outbreak of hostilities, and armed conflict has in fact been initiated by the Eritrean armed forces.

But any arguments from the Eritrean authorities fall short when one examines the situation on the ground because the Djibouti military forces have indeed been attacked solely by Eritrean forces; we have not seen any other force involved on the field of battle. Moreover, all the reasons given remain inadmissible to our Government and for our entire country, which is prepared to defend in every way possible its political and territory integrity.

Our country is not, in principle, a country with an aggressive culture; even less so are our people bellicose. However, we should not be seen as being weak, hesitant, or capable of intimidation. The Republic of Djibouti will not at all hesitate once again, if necessary, to exercise its right to legitimate self-defence accorded under the Charter to any country in order to guarantee its national sovereignty.

The basic pillars and principles of Djiboutian diplomacy in the region and throughout the world are no longer a secret. As a long-standing haven a peace in a troubled region, our country has been a refuge for all the victims of fratricidal wars in the region and is in a good position to assess the value of peace and the practice of tolerance. More particularly, our regional policy is fundamentally based on respect for good neighbourly relations and non-interference in the internal affairs of the countries of the region as well as neutrality, friendship and cooperation with a view to economic development for the benefit of all the peoples in the region.

Guided by these values, we have taken all necessary steps in order to find a diplomatic way out of the current crisis with Eritrea in order to avoid being drawn again into a conflict that we found and still find to be useless.

Djiboutian diplomacy has been very active bilaterally as well as multilaterally. Mediation has been proposed by friendly countries and by regional organizations, such as the African Union and the League of Arab States. Finally, we have come before the Security Council through our letters dated respectively the 5 and 9 May and 11 June 2008.

While all of our attention and all of our efforts have been devoted to a quest for a diplomatic solution to the crisis, Eritrea has rejected all mediation and has persisted in denying the existence of any problem. Of course, at the same time, it has taken advantage of this situation to make further territorial gains and to strengthen the positions of its army. All of these manoeuvres were clearly designed to unleash a war that we would like to avoid until the last minute, as is proven by the attack of 10 June. My country was precipitously forced into a fratricidal war which we detest.

In this regard, I would like to thank the members of the Council, who have heeded our appeal and have acted in an expeditious way, as required by the urgency and seriousness of the situation. The preservation of human life and the cessation of the unjustified hostilities — which are also unjust for the peoples of Djibouti and Eritrea — are and remain an absolute priority for my Government. My country cannot conceive of a scenario of indefinite impasse. That would surely try our patience, our morale and our resources.

We welcome the Council's presidential statement (S/PRST/2008/20) unequivocally condemning Eritrea's military action against Djibouti in Ras Doumeira and Doumeira Island, as well as the statements issued by all regional and subregional organizations. They confirm our initial view of a settlement of the crisis, that the use of force cannot, in any way, be an alternative to dialogue or diplomacy.

We reaffirm our confidence in the capacity of the Council, consistent with its functions and power under the Charter, and we express the hope that a settlement of the dispute with Eritrea will come about by peaceful means in accordance with the principles of justice and international law.

The failure of the authorities of that country to honour all of the obligations they have undertaken under the Charter is clear, because the use of force and the violation of our territory are a reality. No pretext can exempt Eritrea from its obligations to the international community. Furthermore, we note the persistent defiance with regard to all the good offices missions that have been undertaken, including the attempt at mediation with the head of State of Eritrea by Mr. Louis Michel, European Commissioner for development and humanitarian aid, following the summit meeting of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which yielded no better result than previous initiatives.

For its part, the Republic of Djibouti is entirely ready to honour its responsibilities, as it has always done, and will continue tirelessly its efforts to engage in dialogue with a view to establishing lasting peace and stability throughout the region and throughout the world.

Peace and the security of shipping throughout the region are the key stakes in this conflict. As the Council is already aware, the Bab al-Mandab Strait at the southern part of the Red Sea is a strategic strait separating the Arab peninsula from East Africa and is a key passage for international trade and for bringing oil to Europe and Asia. Moreover, analysts today agree that control of the strait will be vital in this conflict. All of our initiatives to prevent conflict have been in vain. Although military hostilities have ceased since 12 June, the consequences would be disastrous if there were to be no reasonable and proportionate response from the Security Council and the international community in the face of this explosive and dangerous situation, which is developing rapidly.

Indeed, since the Council's 12 June condemnation, there have been no positive developments, and there has been no sign of goodwill regarding a peaceful settlement of the dispute from the Eritrean authorities. Quite the contrary: as I address the Council, whereas our army has withdrawn several kilometres since 12 June, Eritrean troops have once again infiltrated the territory of Djibouti. This massive incursion into our country by Eritrean troops, who are present all along our common border without any valid justification should not be taken lightly by the Council; it must be given the importance it deserves.

For lack of any strong international intervention based on dialogue and the disengagement of forces, we are faced with a dilemma: choosing between the status quo and war. Clearly, neither of these two options can be contemplated by our Government. The Security Council, in a word, must be aware of the danger of inaction, which would be appeasing a bellicose and unpredictable leader. It would be, in fact, ill-advised, through negligence or lack of attention, to let this situation remain as it is. Action by the Council to prevent a resumption of fighting between the armed forces, which are now within firing range of each other, would be, we feel, wiser and more realistic. That would prevent an escalation of violence and widespread conflagration, the results of which could not at all be predicted.

Unfortunately, this scenario is well known to the peoples of our region. The only certainty would be a spiral of war and tragedy with great loss of human life. I would add that, if the situation of extreme tension were to continue because of the disdainful attitude of the Eritrean authorities, who have turned a deaf ear to all expressions of goodwill, the latest being a proposal for mediation by the President of the Republic of Yemen, His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Ali Sallah, which was rejected by the Eritrean authorities, for who the only option remains war. We truly hope that Eritrea does not misjudge the determination of Djibouti and the indignation and growing impatience in the face of its tactics and its aggressive behaviour.

In conclusion, my Government is prepared to cooperate with the Security Council and the Secretary-General in their efforts to resolve this unfortunate unilateral military adventure, which merits the Council's urgent, serious and great attention.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of Djibouti for his statement.

I now give invite the representative of Eritrea to take the floor.

Mr. Desta (Eritrea): In the interests of time, I will read a shortened version of my statement. I kindly request that the full text be circulated in the Council Chamber.

I wish to thank the presidency and the Council for according my delegation the opportunity to share its views on the current developments between Eritrea and Djibouti. Eritrea observes with great regret that the Government of the Republic of Djibouti has chosen to engage in the levelling of incessant and baseless accusations against the Government of Eritrea for the past two months. Eritrea has made no incursion into the territory of Djibouti, and it does not have any territorial ambitions in the region.

There have been numerous contacts between officials of the two Governments, including at the highest level. The two leaders spoke about the current development and decided to address it in a calm and quiet manner that takes into account the sisterly relationship between the two countries and the need to ensure peace and security in the subregion.

However, for reasons that are best known to the authorities of Djibouti, the understanding reached by the highest officials of both countries was put aside and the matter was taken to the public arena, with totally unwarranted hostile anti-Eritrea campaigns. Attempts to drag the Government of Eritrea into animosity continued, but, Eritrea did not respond to the hostile campaign. Instead, it chose the path of restraint and patience. This was for profound reasons, because Eritrea is keenly aware that the provocative campaign originates from — and is designed and packaged — elsewhere. Indeed, Djibouti and its people cannot, by any stretch of imagination, have any interest in this affair. The issue is not in reality an agenda or any other matter that regards Djibouti.

The fact is there is no territorial or other dispute between Eritrea and Djibouti. Djibouti's unwarranted hostile campaign is underpinned by, and synchronized with, other ulterior motives and regional developments.

Allow me to elaborate further on the dimensions and ramifications of this manufactured crisis.

On 22 April this year, a few weeks before the onset of this unwarranted campaign, the Ethiopian regime set up a new military camp on Mount Musa Ali. Ethiopia built a network of winding roads up the mountain and deployed offensive long-range artillery and heavy equipment directed at Eritrea, with the apparent knowledge and acquiescence of its major backers.

Musa Ali is perched at the intersection of the borders of the three countries: Djibouti, Ethiopia and Eritrea. The Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) has, in the course of its delimitation and demarcation awards of the Eritrea-Ethiopia boundary, determined the respective sovereignties of both countries at that trilateral junction. Ethiopia's actions, six years after the EEBC award, are in flagrant violation of those determinations.

In spite of those illegal acts of destabilization, Eritrea chose to keep silent so as to pursue its established legal approach with a higher focus. But Eritrea's restraint in the face of that provocation only aroused further frustration in the forces that wanted to stir up trouble by trampling the rule of law. A hostile campaign was set in motion, and on 10 June the Government of Djibouti was pushed to launch a provocative military attack on our units on the border. The attack by Djibouti started at approximately 7 p.m. and continued to 11 June. To avoid the attack, Eritrea pulled its forces back. On 12 June, Djibouti again continued its attack, accompanied by helicopters. At that time, Eritrea responded and defended itself. However, Djibouti first cried foul, accusing Eritrea of the very acts that it had perpetrated. As a local proverb says, "a slingshot hits its target and emits a shrill cry first". Djibouti thus did not only launch an unprovoked attack, but levelled a trumped-up and well-orchestrated accusation against Eritrea.

What was more surprising was the unbalanced and unwarranted presidential statement that the Security Council adopted on 12 June on the basis of one side's information. In spite of all those adversities, Eritrea did not relax but instead heightened its restraint.

As I pointed out earlier, the underlying objective of the military provocation, using Djibouti as a Trojan horse, is to divert Eritrea from the main agenda — its legal pursuit to ensure Ethiopia's eviction from its sovereign territories in accordance with the final and binding determinations of the EEBC — and to embroil Eritrea on another front. The whole idea is to entangle us in mutual recriminations with Djibouti. That would lead to endless mediation missions and the aggravation of putative regional crises.

In that light, the new campaign this week in the Security Council is highly regrettable. Why has Djibouti been prompted to submit an accusation against Eritrea at this level? Why has the Security Council been summoned to discuss a dubious and irresponsible accusation against a Member State with such hastiness? When the Security Council has kept silent or shown little, if any, concern regarding Ethiopia's flagrant violation of international law and its occupation of sovereign Eritrean territories, how has it been persuaded now to discuss a territorial dispute that does not exist and where no territory has been occupied? Why is an unwarranted skirmish, which Djibouti provoked in the first place, being misconstrued as an act of aggression that deserves prompt consideration and action by the Security Council? Why is the issue being blown up out of all proportion? We could ask endless questions.

The Government of Eritrea wishes to underline again that it will not be plunged — through provocations, enticements or other mendacious accusations — into a crisis to become a scapegoat for misguided policies in our region. It will continue to value close cooperation with Djibouti, as demonstrated by the signing of several bilateral ventures recently in the areas of trade, health, fishing and infrastructure.

Indeed, if the Security Council is to maintain regional peace and security, it must look elsewhere. It cannot and must not target the victim. I wish to call on countries with global reach and influence in the region to take a careful look at their policies to ensure that they become a positive force for development, peace and security for the people in the region.

I also wish to draw the attention of the Council to Eritrea's commitment to exercising restraint and remaining politically committed to solving peacefully any problem that might arise between Djibouti and Eritrea.

The President: I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make comments or ask questions.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like first of all to thank Under-Secretary-General Honwana, for his briefing. I welcome the presence here today of the Prime Minister of Djibouti, the Permanent Representative of Eritrea, and the representatives of the African Union and the Arab League. Those two organizations have an important role to play in resolving this crisis.

I would like to highlight two points. First, the border dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea has become an international issue. The Council has already discussed, in informal consultations, various border disputes between Djibouti and Eritrea.

In May, the Secretariat advised the Council of tensions between the two countries on the issue of the promontory and Doumeira Island following various defensive exercises undertaken by Eritrea. France made a statement to this Council, as it had already done in its national capacity, condemning that violation of Djibouti's sovereignty. At the time, the Council welcomed the positive gestures made by Eritrea, which had withdrawn from certain positions. We had hoped that the two parties, with the help of the Chair of the African Union, the Arab League and other interested States, were on the verge of engaging in dialogue in order to find a diplomatic solution to their dispute.

The Council was, however, forced to react to the new situation created by the bloody confrontations of 10 and 11 June. On 12 June, in a presidential statement, the Council condemned the military action conducted by Eritrea against Djibouti and called on the two parties to implement a ceasefire, exercise restraint and — with regard to Eritrea in particular — withdraw its forces and return to the status quo ante.

The situation on the ground seems to be stable, but it could still degenerate very rapidly in an area where the rugged landscape forces the two armies to face each other at close proximity. The parties, in particular Eritrea, must imperatively abide by the presidential statement of 12 June. In particular, that means that Eritrea must retreat from its defensive installations that it has started building on the southern flank of the promontory leading to the crest of the hill and that the two parties withdraw from Doumeira Island. The troops from Djibouti have done so; they have withdrawn. The Eritrean troops have not.

The Security Council will therefore continue to follow this question very closely, as will the African Union and the Arab League.

The second point that I would like to highlight is that the two parties have a new window of opportunity to find, with the support the international community, a diplomatic solution to their dispute. France welcomes the role being played by the European Union Commissioner, Louis Michel, who is in contact with both parties. We must not underestimate the difficulties facing us, but the Horn of Africa has already had its share of conflict, and it is in the interests of the two parties to avoid a new one.

I would like to emphasize that we believe that Djibouti plays a stabilizing role, especially by welcoming the holding on its territory of negotiations between the Transitional Federal Government and the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia. That region is very important to the stability of Africa as a whole.

Djibouti and France have established a relationship of friendship, cooperation and trust that dates back many years. In that regard, France fully intends to respect its commitments to Djibouti. Neither a large-scale conflict nor a frozen conflict is a satisfactory alternative.

I should now like to return to the issue of the border, which is at the heart of the problem and to which the parties must find an agreement. The border was delimited by a Franco-Ethiopian agreement of 1897 and, subsequently, by Franco-Italian protocols in 1900 and 1901. Other later agreements have not been ratified. The border has never been defined. With regard to Doumeira Island, the Franco-Italian protocol provides that the two parties would eventually determine sovereignty over the island and that, in the meanwhile, they would not deploy troops there on a permanent basis.

Several relevant documents of long standing therefore exist, none of which has been signed by the States that are currently parties to the conflict. That uncertainty twice led to tension between Eritrea and Djibouti during the 1990s. France therefore hopes that the two parties — along with a third party of their choosing, if they so desire — can find a negotiated solution and that the border of Doumeira can be definitively demarcated.

Along with the African Union, the League of Arab States and Qatar, we have expressed to the two parties the readiness of France to support them in such an undertaking. We have in particular proposed the sending of an envoy or a legal team to facilitate the parties' discussions. I should like today to reiterate our readiness to do that.

Lastly, I should like to underscore the fact that the two points I have raised — internationalization and a call for dialogue between the parties — are in no way mutually exclusive. To the contrary, it is clear that it is not up to the international community, and especially not the Security Council, to define the border for the parties. However, we must together help the parties to find a negotiated solution that is their own. My delegation therefore believes that it would be useful today for the Security Council to send some specific messages. We regret that Eritrea did not respond to the calls contained in the Security Council presidential statement of 12 June. We call on the two parties, especially Eritrea, to withdraw their forces and to return to the status quo ante.

We would like to thank the regional and subregional organizations involved in helping the two parties to find a negotiated solution.

It would be very helpful for the Secretary-General to deploy a fact-finding mission to the region, which should have the full cooperation of both parties. The Secretary-General could also keep the Security Council apprised of developments in the situation as soon as he has a report from the mission we are calling for.

I think that this is a useful and unifying message from which you, Sir, could draw when you meet the press following this meeting.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): Let me start by welcoming the Prime Minister of Djibouti, Mr. Dileita Mohamed Dileita, and his delegation to the Security Council. I should also like to thank you, Sir, for organizing this meeting in a timely manner in response to a request by a Member State, which, under Article 35 of the Charter of the United Nations, may bring any dispute to the attention of the Security Council. We appreciate the statements and explanations that have been given by the representatives of Djibouti and Eritrea. We also thank Mr. Honwana for the briefing he has given us.

The recent clash between Eritrea and Djibouti along their shared border deeply concerns us, as it is a breach of international peace and security. Above all, we are also very troubled at the prospect of a further aggravation of the already volatile situation in the Horn of Africa. It may be that neither side has the intention to allow the situation to slide into full-fledged conflagration. Notwithstanding their intentions, the situation could in fact develop in an unanticipated direction due to the chain of action-and-reaction and perception-and-misperception, and spiral towards wider confrontation. The resort to military force is unacceptable. We view this situation as very serious and warranting our continued vigilance.

We strongly encourage the parties to resort to peaceful dispute settlement mechanisms, in accordance with Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations, which urges that parties seek diplomatic and judicial approaches to dispute settlement, as well as the resort to regional agencies or other peaceful means of their choice.

Security and the sense of security are holistic and indivisible. Obviously, there is urgency to develop a sense of mutual security, both bilaterally and regionally, as one country's security cannot be achieved at the cost of another country's insecurity. Both Djibouti and Eritrea need to feel safe for security to be preserved.

We call upon both parties to move forward to resolve this dispute expeditiously in accordance with international law, including the acceptance of third-party mediation as necessary. We are cognizant of the importance of finding a mutually acceptable solution to the border conflict for both countries and recognize that their bilateral relations have been peaceful in the past. There is therefore still hope for a solution and all appropriate avenues should be pursued.

We appreciate and commend the role played by the African Union and the Arab League, as well as by third countries, as they assist in the conflict resolution and dispute settlement processes.

Ultimately, peace and stability along the border must be maintained. That quest for peace is even more critical in the light of the volatility in the Horn of Africa and the strategic value of the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait.

Finally, my delegation wishes to reiterate the sentiments expressed in the Council's presidential statement of 12 June 2008.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to welcome the Prime Minister of the Republic of Djibouti, who has been kind enough to meet with us this afternoon, illustrating his belief in the importance of the matter we are addressing today.

Before I begin my statement, I should like to thank Mr. Honwana for the briefing he has just given us on the dispute pitting Djibouti against Eritrea.

In its presidential statement of 12 June, to which Ambassador Ripert referred a few moments ago, the Security Council expressed its concern about the serious incidents that have taken place on the border between Djibouti and Eritrea, which resulted in casualties to the Djiboutian army. The Council also called on the two parties, and on Eritrea in particular, to exercise restraint, withdraw their respective forces and return to the status quo ante. It also called for negotiations to begin without delay in order to put an end to the conflict.

My country categorically condemns the use of force and reiterates that there exists an obligation on States to demonstrate mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We continue to be concerned about the ongoing tension between the two countries. It therefore seems to us that it is the duty of the Security Council to urge them to refrain from any action that could lead to an escalation of the conflict. It is also crucial that it emphasize dialogue over military action. It is therefore essential that Djibouti and Eritrea agree to the offers of mediation made to them, notably by the African Union, the League of Arab States and other friendly countries. It goes without saying that Burkina Faso, out of a desire for peace, welcomes these initiatives and these efforts, which we hope will continue.

With regard to the rather disturbing situation in the Horn of Africa, everything should be done to help these two States to overcome their dispute because it is crucial to spare their respective populations from the agony of a new confrontation with unpredictable consequences. Therefore, we hope that the two countries' will agree to cooperate fully with the subregional and regional organizations and agree to the assistance of friendly countries with a view to finding a final solution to their dispute. We also urge the international community to assist in this endeavour.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the French delegation for the draft of a statement to the press that it submitted to us. We would like to say that we fully support it.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation at today's meeting of the Prime Minister of Djibouti and we are grateful to him for the evaluation he gave us. We have also listened carefully to the statement by the Permanent Representative of Eritrea.

The Russian Federation is seriously concerned over the serious rise in confrontation that took place on the border between Djibouti and Eritrea earlier this month. Russia fully agrees with the statement made by the President of the Security Council adopted in connection with this incident, which includes a condemnation of the hostilities begun by Eritrea against Djibouti in Ras Doumeira and Doumeira Island. We call on both sides to take upon themselves the obligation of observing a ceasefire, show maximum restraint and return to their previous positions.

Russia is carefully observing the developments in the situation on the border between Eritrea and Djibouti. We believe that the border problems must be settled only through negotiations. We call upon both sides to cooperate and undertake diplomatic efforts for a peaceful settlement and in strict conformity with the rules of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

We support the efforts undertaken by the African Union and the League of Arab States and the various interested parties in order to achieve an early solution to the confrontation and a settlement between Djibouti and Eritrea. We call upon both sides to cooperate in this endeavour. We are counting on the implementation of what has been called for by the Security Council and of the recommendation of the Secretary-General to make use of his good offices in coordination with regional organizations. The aim is to initiate bilateral negotiations between Djibouti and Eritrea that may engender greater trust and bring about a peaceful settlement to the situation on the border between these two countries.

The Security Council will doubtless continue to follow the momentum in the situation in the interest of supporting stability and of preventing a destabilization in this important region of the Horn of Africa.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the holding of this emergency meeting of the Council. We would like to thank Mr. Honwana for his briefing.

On behalf of the Chinese delegation, we welcome Prime Minister Dileita of Djibouti to this meeting and thank him for his statement. I would also like to welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Eritrea and thank him for his statement. We also welcome the presence of the representatives of the African Union and the League of Arab States at today's meeting.

China is attentively following the recent border dispute between Djibouti and Eritrea. We find developments in the border areas to be worrisome. We call upon the two parties to proceed from the greater interests of relations between the two countries and of peace and security in the Horn of Africa. We also call upon them to exercise restraint and prevent the situation from worsening further. China hopes that the two parties will resolve their differences through dialogue and negotiations.

China supports African Union and League of Arab States and other regional organizations and countries of the region in playing an active mediation role. The Council should continue to play an active and constructive role in promoting the resolution of the differences of the two parties through dialogue and negotiations. The Council may strengthen its contact and communication with Djibouti and Eritrea, listen to the views and requests of the parties concerned and coordinate with and support the good offices of the African Union and other regional organizations.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Allow me also to welcome the Prime Minister of Djibouti and thank him for visiting us in New York. We still have very fond memories of the hospitable and gracious way in which the Government of Djibouti treated us when we visited that country. We are very thankful for that. We also welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Djibouti and thank him for also having come to this meeting. We are pleased with the participation in this meeting of the representative of Eritrea and the representatives of the League of Arab States and of the African Union.

The situation that is being faced by the Council, and indeed by the African Union, is a very difficult one. That is why we support the holding of this emergency meeting today.

We wish to appeal to both Djibouti and Eritrea and to emphasize that the use of force in resolving disputes is both unworkable and indeed unsustainable. We join others in expressing our concern over the escalation of tensions in the Horn of Africa and condemn the use of force to solve disputes. Unfortunately, this involves part of our continent, which has seen its own share of troubles.

We appeal to both parties to exercise restraint. We support the call of the African Union for the parties to immediately return to the situation prevailing before this dispute began. We urge the parties to engage in dialogue in an effort to resolve their differences. We encourage the efforts of the Secretary-General and thank Mr. Honwana for his briefing. We believe that the good offices of the Secretary-General must be encouraged to help these two friendly neighbours resolve their dispute.

We also wish to point out that both the League of Arab States and the African Union have also offered their good offices in this dispute. We can only express the hope that the two countries will heed the call of the international community, not allow their differences to balloon into major disputes and do everything in their power to resolve their problems in a peaceful manner.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): At the outset, I wish to thank to Mr. Honwana for his briefing to the Council this afternoon. My delegation also wishes to welcome the participation of His Excellency the Prime Minister of Djibouti, as well as the presence of the Permanent Representative of Eritrea and the representatives of the African Union and the League of Arab States at the Council's meeting today.

My delegation notes with concern the escalation of tension on the border between Eritrea and Djibouti, most notably the serious incidents that occurred on 10 June 2008 along the frontier between the two countries. We wish to underline the fundamental principle to be applied to such situations, namely that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States must be fully respected and that every dispute and conflict should be resolved through peaceful negotiations in a manner consistent with international law and with the United Nations Charter. We therefore call upon the two parties to show utmost restraint, to refrain from any threat or use of force, to strengthen the current ceasefire and to intensify dialogue to de-escalate the tension.

It goes without saying that the primary responsibility to resolve the conflict rests with the two parties themselves. Viet Nam, however, commends the efforts undertaken by the African Union, the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to facilitate the settlement of the dispute. In that connection, we welcome the decision made by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union at its 136th meeting, held on 12 June 2008, on the situation on the border between Djibouti and Eritrea, as well as on the development in relations between the two countries.

My delegation also wishes to encourage the Secretary-General, in coordination with regional efforts, to use his good offices and to reach out to both parties to promote dialogue on arrangements for the immediate return to the situation prevailing at the common border between the two countries before the incidents leading to the current tension, including the withdrawal from the border of all forces that have been positioned there since February 2008, and for the development of confidence-building measures to resolve their bilateral dispute in a peaceful manner.

Mr. Ettalhi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to join those who spoke before me in welcoming to the Council His Excellency Mr. Dileita Mohamed Dileita, Prime Minister of the State of Djibouti. I take this opportunity to thank him for the warm welcome and generosity with which he received the Security Council mission in Djibouti earlier this month, as well as for the facilities offered to the mission for its meetings with the Somali parties. We thank His Excellency the Prime Minister for his statement to the Council today, and we also express our gratitude to the representative of Eritrea for his statement. Our thanks also go to Mr. Honwana for his briefing.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya expresses its deep sorrow and concern over the military confrontations that have recently taken place between two neighbouring countries that not only have ties of geographic proximity but also numerous other ties, so numerous that it is difficult to imagine any recourse to arms or force in order to resolve even the most profound differences.

Africa in general and the Horn of Africa in particular have long been paying a high price as a result of armed conflicts. That price has been paid in the lives of its men and women, in human suffering and in lost development opportunities. It is also unfortunate that while armed conflicts are receding everywhere else in the world, even in Africa, armed conflicts in Eastern Africa are only spreading and growing more intense.

Libya hopes that the Security Council, in cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, as the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, will work towards putting an end to these conflicts and preventing their escalation by assisting the conflicting parties to reach a peaceful solution. I do not wish to say that the Council's inability to settle the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea or to put an end to the instability and insecurity in Somalia might be among the reasons for the threat posed to peace along the border between Eritrea and Djibouti.

My country strongly condemns the use of force and the resort to arms. My country calls on the two friendly countries Djibouti and Eritrea to turn to dialogue, and we ask them to heed the call at the 136th meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, as well as the Arab League resolution dated 12 June 2008 and the presidential statement (S/PRST/2008/20) issued by the Security Council at its 5908th meeting. We call upon both parties to return to the status quo on the borders before the crisis erupted.

My country reaffirms the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and stresses that any attempt to undermine that concept constitutes a threat to peace and security. My delegation reaffirms and recalls the need for African States to respect the borders inherited from the days of colonialism, which they voluntarily agreed to do within the framework of the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union.

We hope that the Council will look into resolving this issue by helping both parties to reach a political settlement.

In closing, we thank the French delegation for preparing the main elements of a verbal presidential briefing to the press, and we support them.

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to join in welcoming to this Council His Excellency Mr. Dileita Mohamed Dileita, Prime Minister of Djibouti, and in acknowledging the presence here of the Permanent Representative of Eritrea and the representatives of the African Union and of the League of Arab States. I should also like to express our thanks for the briefing we have received today from Mr. João Honwana of the Department of Political Affairs.

The Council is meeting today at the request of the Government of Djibouti for the purpose of assessing the serious situation on the border between Djibouti and Eritrea, where confrontations have recently occurred between the armed forces of the two countries.

In that connection, allow me to outline Panama's position. The United Nations and each and every one of its Member States are called upon to respect the territorial integrity of States, and that includes respecting their borders. When two neighbouring States dispute the location of borders, the dispute should be resolved through bilateral negotiations. If an agreement cannot be reached between the two parties, they should submit the dispute to the International Court of Justice. In the event of any dispute that might jeopardize international peace and security, this Council is called upon to act to prevent the dispute from escalating into armed conflict. To that purpose, the Security Council should use all means at its disposal, including dialogue, participation and collaboration between Member States.

We thus appeal to both parties to withdraw the military forces that have recently been deployed on the border and immediately to initiate bilateral dialogue, making use of the good offices and mechanisms provided by the United Nations and other relevant international bodies. Likewise, Panama considers it appropriate for the Secretary-General to keep the Security Council informed of any developments in the situation.

Mr. Quarrey (United Kingdom): We join others in warmly welcoming the Prime Minister of Djibouti today and also the representatives of Eritrea, the African Union and the League of Arab States. We thank Mr. Honwana for his briefing.

Of course, we welcome reports that the situation is calm at present, but we are also concerned by other reports of regroupings and reinforcements. The situation clearly remains fragile in an already very troubled region. We would reiterate all the concerns that were set out in the presidential statement of 12 June, including condemnation of the Eritrean military incursion, deep regret at the loss of life and the need for maximum restraint.

Like others, we welcome the efforts of the African Union, the League of Arab States and third countries to help the parties find a peaceful way forward. We would urge both parties, and especially Eritrea, to engage fully with those efforts. We agree with France that the Council should send a message today through a statement to the press. We thank the French delegation for the elements that it circulated yesterday, which we fully support.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): I thank Mr. Honwana for his briefing. I join others in extending a very warm welcome to Prime Minister Dileita and to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Djibouti. We strongly appreciate that they have come from Djibouti to give us first-hand accounts. I wish to thank Prime Minister Dileita and the Permanent Representative of Eritrea, Ambassador Desta, for their decision to take part, together around this table, in this important and extremely timely meeting, in order to convey their national perspectives to this Council and to clarify their respective positions.

As we have heard, there are conflicting perceptions and positions, but it is important that those conflicting positions be expressed around a table, not on the ground. I thank the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States, Mr. Mahmassani, and the representative of the African Union because their role, as has been stated already, will be crucial in the future.

I mentioned the importance of the dialogue around the table. In fact, Italy's expectation is that this meeting — and this is important — will serve as the beginning of a renewed engagement by both parties to exercise restraint and resolve their differences through dialogue, international law and diplomacy, thereby demonstrating their attachment to peace and security in the wider region. To the extent that we will be able to catalyse and sustain that positive dynamic, fully and promptly placing the United Nations political machinery at the disposal of the parties, as expressed in our presidential statement of 12 June, we will have paid a significant service to our common cause of advancing the role of the Security Council as an instrument of conflict prevention, as mandated by Article 34 of the United Nations Charter. In addition, as recalled by Article 33 of the Charter and shown by the African experience on a number of occasions, the key to conflict prevention ultimately lies in the hands of interested Member States, as has already been stated by others.

Adopting a bottom-up approach, looking at events from the ground and lending the strongest possible support to the good offices or mediation offices offered by the African Union and the Arab League should be retained as essential elements of our involvement. Cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and Governments will be particularly crucial in the coming weeks, as we will need to acquire a more accurate and detailed picture of the situation. The first account of events, as we have heard, confirms the seriousness of current tensions between the two countries. The crisis indeed has the potential to become a threat to regional stability.

However, a number of elements will need to be further investigated and brought to light. That is why we strongly support the urgent launch of a fact-finding mission by the Secretariat, which would provide essential elements for this Council to develop its position and approach to the issue. We feel that it is equally important that the Security Council President bring to the attention of the international media the perceptions, assessments and concerns that have been expressed by members of the Council. Here, we fully recognize our position in the language that has been proposed to the presidency by the French delegation, which we thank. We fully recognize ourselves in those elements.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate our thanks to the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Djibouti and express once more Italy's trust in their Government, as well as in Government of Eritrea, and in the governing will and capacity to agree on a way out of this crisis using the tools of diplomacy and cooperation.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by welcoming Mr. Dileita Mohamed Dileita, Prime Minister of Djibouti, and his Minister for Foreign Affairs, and by acknowledging the presence of the Permanent Representatives of Djibouti and Eritrea and the representatives of the League of Arab States and the African Union.

The Horn of Africa cannot afford yet another conflict. That region cannot afford to resort to violence to settle yet another dispute. Brother nations must find solutions around the table of dialogue rather than in the trenches and with the use of weapons.

Although it is only natural that different countries have different views regarding their respective interests, particularly where colonial borders have not been consolidated, we feel that it should be pointed out that solutions that emanate from peace be based on caution and common sense and allow for areas of growth for brother countries. The conflict between Djibouti and Eritrea has its roots in the issue of borders that have never been defined and that are disputed. Such questions should be settled, in our view, through consultations and negotiations between the parties that explore ways of reaching new agreements through arbitration, mediation and the possibility of appealing to higher courts, such as the International Court of Justice. The use of specialized tribunals should also be considered as an option.

Costa Rica believes that, with respect to this situation, regional organizations can offer very valuable support. We are therefore grateful for the efforts of the African Union and the League of Arab States, and urge them to continue to provide forums for a peaceful and consensual settlement of the situation. Of course, we also appeal to Djibouti and Eritrea to resume dialogue and to seek a solution to their differences through negotiation, making use of the appropriate instruments and bodies, and promptly to end the dispute between them.

We thank the delegation of France for the points it circulated yesterday, which we can support for inclusion in a statement.

Mr. Grauls (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the Prime Minister of the Republic of Djibouti and the representatives of Eritrea, the African Union and the League of Arab States. We also thank the Secretariat for its briefing.

Belgium shares the concern expressed around this table regarding the border incidents that took place from 10 to 12 June in Ras Doumeira and Doumeira Island. Those incidents caused numerous deaths and much damage, and could have quickly degenerated. The situation continues to run a serious risk of escalation that is not limited to the countries concerned but potentially threatens the entire region.

The Security Council reacted speedily on 12 June by reminding both countries of their commitment to dialogue, if necessary with the assistance of other countries and regional organizations. That appeal remains valid.

Belgium thanks all those who have helped in the search for a settlement to the crisis. It is in the interests of neither country to prolong the current situation of confusion. Belgium encourages the two countries themselves, first and foremost, as well as others involved, including the Secretary-General, to pursue their efforts. Belgium supports the dispatch by the Secretary-General of a fact-finding mission and encourages him to consult with the African Union and the League of Arab States with respect to the conclusions from their respective initiatives.

Finally, my delegation wishes to thank France for submitting elements of language for a statement to the press.

Mr. Vilović (Croatia): First of all, let me join previous speakers in welcoming and thanking the Prime Minister of Djibouti for being here with us, as well as the representative of Eritrea and the representatives of the African Union and the League of Arab States.

For some time now, we have been carefully monitoring the escalation of the incidents between the two neighbouring countries, and we fully share the grave concerns expressed by all member States on the seriousness of the situation. It is even more serious given the fragile and sensitive situation in the region.

Having said that, we welcome today's debate as timely. We also value the opportunity to hear from the parties themselves, as well as from the regional organizations involved in helping them to de-escalate tensions. We appreciate their efforts and hope that they will yield concrete results shortly.

My delegation would like to use this occasion to renew the call on the parties, in particular Eritrea, to exercise restraint, to withdraw their forces to the status quo ante and to resolve the dispute through dialogue and peaceful means, including through third-party mediation. In our opinion, any military option is not acceptable; we strongly condemn any use of force and stress the importance of respect for the territorial integrity of States. In that respect, we welcome the announced press statement as a timely and welcome action of the Council.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United States.

I, too, would like to welcome the presence of Prime Minister Dileita at this meeting. We also welcome the participation of Ambassador Desta, the Permanent Representative of Eritrea, and the representatives of the African Union and the League of Arab States.

The United States remains extremely concerned with the situation along the Djibouti-Eritrea border. Today, I would like to make the following two points.

First, on 12 June, the Council adopted a presidential statement that condemned Eritrean military action against Djibouti, called upon the parties to commit to a ceasefire and show maximum restraint, and urged both sides to cooperate and engage in diplomatic efforts to resolve the matter peacefully. While no new violence has occurred, Eritrea remains in an aggressive military posture towards Djibouti and refuses to engage with Djibouti directly or through a third party to negotiate a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

We reiterate our call on both sides, and particularly on Eritrea, to withdraw their military forces from the common border area and to engage in a diplomatic process to resolve the matter peacefully, in accordance with international law, as the representative of Italy and others have urged. If Eritrea fails to engage in a peaceful solution and pull its forces back from its border with Djibouti, the Security Council should consider appropriate actions or measures.

Secondly, the Security Council cannot condone Eritrea's regional destabilization, especially when it comes at such a great cost to its neighbours. The conflict with Djibouti occurs against a backdrop of destabilizing behaviour elsewhere by Eritrea. In

Somalia, the Eritrean Government has supported extremist groups, including the Al-Qaida-affiliated Al-Shabab, which refuses to negotiate on a peaceful political solution in Somalia. Eritrea has worked to discredit and disrupt the recent discussion between Somali parties in Djibouti. The Government of Eritrea restricted the activities of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) — a force it freely and voluntarily invited to its country — preventing it from executing its mandate. Finally, the Eritrea Government stopped all fuel delivery to UNMEE, and consequently the United Nations was forced to withdraw UNMEE from Eritrea, which further destabilized an already dangerous situation.

For Eritrea, even now it is not too late to resume its place as a responsible Member of this Organization and to resume its status as a good neighbour. We will be watching Eritrea's actions closely and we will insist that Eritrea be held accountable for its actions.

Finally, my delegation can support the elements for use in the press statement proposed by the French delegation.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to Ms. Alice Aghenebit Mungwa, Adviser to the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union.

Ms. Mungwa: On behalf of the Commission of the African Union, I would first of all like to thank you, Sir, for inviting us to participate in this important meeting and to convey the apologies of the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, who has already travelled to Sharm el-Sheikh for the meetings of the upcoming eleventh ordinary session of the African Union taking place at the end of the month. She therefore could not attend this meeting in person. It is on me that the great honour and privilege have fallen today to convey the remarks of the African Union Commission to the Council today.

In view of the challenges that the situation between Djibouti and Eritrea may present for the already challenged region of the Horn of Africa, your initiative, Mr. President, to organize this timely and important meeting once again illustrates the continuing attention of the Security Council to matters of concern to Africa and highlights the growing cooperation between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union in dealing with common agenda items. Allow me also, Sir, to take this opportunity to convey our deep gratitude to you and to all other members of the Council for the special focus placed on Africa during your presidency.

We would also like to join in welcoming His Excellency the Prime Minister of Djibouti, His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the other members of their delegation. We thank the Prime Minister for the very informative briefing he gave the Council today. We would also like to thank Ambassador Desta of Eritrea for his statement to the Council. The presence of the representatives of these two countries in the Council today is a clear sign that both are willing to give priority to the path of dialogue, and we wish to commend them for that choice.

We also thank Mr. Honwana for his statement. Our appreciation goes as well to all members of the Council for their statements today.

As members are aware, Eritrea and Djibouti are two important and valued States members of the African Union, and the surprising occurrence of the regrettable incidents under consideration in the Council today was never expected — even remotely — despite the persisting tensions in the Horn of Africa as a whole.

We would like to recall that at its 121st and 125th meetings, held on 24 April and 2 May respectively, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union exchanged views on relations between the State of Eritrea and the Republic of Djibouti, following a letter sent to the Peace and Security Council on 24 April 2008 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Djibouti regarding the situation at the border between the two countries.

For its part, the Commission of the African Union formally wrote to the two countries to gather as much information as possible about the situation at their common border and about the steps they may have taken to resolve the situation amicably. Further to the recommendation of the Peace and Security Council, the Commission also dispatched a mission to assess the situation on the ground and to consult with the two countries. The mission was received by authorities of Djibouti and is still waiting to be received by Eritrea.

In the light of the disturbing tensions unfolding between Djibouti and Eritrea — in particular the incidents between the armed forces of the two countries — since Tuesday, 10 June 2008, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, at its 136th meeting, held on 12 June 2008, strongly condemned the use of force and stressed the imperative need to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of member States, in conformity with the Constitutive Act of the African Union. The Council called for the immediate return to the situation prevailing at the common border between the two countries before the current tension began, including the withdrawal from the border of all forces that have been positioned there since 4 February 2008. The Peace and Security Council again urged the two countries to show utmost restraint, resort to dialogue to resolve any bilateral dispute and give their full cooperation to all efforts made to that end. Furthermore, the African Union's Council decided to meet in due course at the appropriate level to consider the situation and to take necessary decisions.

We are pleased to confirm to the Security Council today that the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, in implementation of that decision, will discuss the situation between Eritrea and Djibouti at the level of heads of State and Government on 29 June 2008, on the margins of the eleventh ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, to be held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

In that regard, and pursuant to the provisions of the Protocol of the Peace and Security Council, Eritrea and Djibouti have been invited to that summit. We would like to take the opportunity of their presence in the Security Council today to underscore the importance of their participation at the summit meeting with a view to finding a peaceful and lasting solution to their differences.

We would also like to reiterate the appeal of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to the two countries; we hope that all parties will act positively and constructively for the restoration of peaceful and cordial relations between them, in the interest of peace and security for the Governments and the peoples of both countries, and for the subregion and Africa as a whole. We are confident that the deliberations of the Security Council today will contribute to that process.

The President: I thank Ms. Mungwa for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Yahya Mahmassani, Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States

Mr. Mahmassani (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for inviting the League of Arab States to participate in this meeting. I welcome the presence in the Council Chamber today of His Excellency Mr. Dileita Mohamed Dileita, Prime Minister of Djibouti. I thank the Permanent Representative of Eritrea for his statement and the representative of Department of Political Affairs for his briefing.

The Security Council is meeting today to consider a new crisis confronting the Horn of Africa. Since February, the Government of Djibouti has reported to the League of Arab States concerning a gradual massing of Eritrean troops along the border between the two countries, including fortifications and trenches and encroachments by Eritrean soldiers on Djibouti's side of the border, overlooking Red Sea shipping lanes.

Following a letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Djibouti addressed to the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States with a view to addressing the tensions between Djibouti and Eritrea by peaceful means, the League sent a fact-finding mission to the Ras Doumeira area in the Republic of Djibouti, whose visit occurred from 9 to 11 May 2008, in order to seek a settlement of the crisis. The mission met with officials in Djibouti and sought a meeting with officials in Eritrea, but the Eritrean side did not respond to its request.

The Council of the League of Arab States met on 12 June to discuss the situation between Djibouti and Eritrea. It adopted a decision which stressed the importance of respect for Djibouti's sovereignty and territorial integrity and rejected any aggression against that country. It called upon Eritrea to withdraw its forces immediately from the border with Djibouti. The Council of the League renewed its call for respect for the principle of good-neighbourliness between the two countries and respect for the post-colonial borders. It called upon the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the Arab Peace and Security Council to continue their efforts to deal with the issue, and it mandated the League secretariat to undertake necessary contacts with the Government of Eritrea with a view to addressing the situation, easing the tension and ending the confrontation along the border between the two neighbouring countries.

The current situation along the border between Djibouti and Eritrea is a source of concern, because there are many potential repercussions. A crisis of this kind cannot be resolved by military means or by the use or threat of use of force. The only way to resolve the crisis is through peaceful negotiations between the parties concerned to find a solution. The territorial integrity and stability of States must be respected, and Arab-African cooperation must be deepened.

We call on the parties to show restraint and to take no measures to escalate the situation. A peaceful outcome to the crisis requires the parties to commit to implementing the agreements between them, to maintain good-neighbourly relations, and to refrain from intervening in each other's affairs.

The Horn of Africa continues to experience numerous upheavals and instability. It certainly does not need any new such situations. The crisis must therefore be addressed and contained expeditiously. We believe that the role of the Security Council, the main body responsible for international peace and security, is pivotal in that regard.

The President: I thank Ambassador Mahmassani for his briefing.

There are no other speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.